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EXERCISES OF PIETY:

OR,

MEDITATIONS

ON THE

PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES AND DUTIES

OF

RELIGION.

FOR THE USE OF ENLIGHTENED AND VIRTUOUS
CHRISTIANS.



BY

G. J. ZOLLIKOFER,

LATE PASTOR OF THE REFORMED CHURCH AT LEIPSIK, IN GERMANY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH EDITION, BY

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AMERICA.



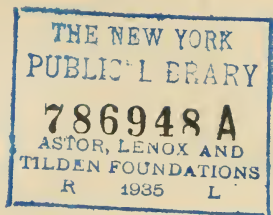
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BY THE

TRANSLATOR.

THE *following Exercises of Piety, are the production of Mr. G. J. ZOLLIKOFER, the worthy pastor of the reformed church at Leipzig. They made their first appearance in the German language, but were lately published in French, at Francfort. The French edition, from which these Exercises were translated, is printed in two volumes, of which the devotional services, now published, make but an inconsiderable part, and are chiefly taken from the second volume.*

The enlightened and virtuous Christian, for whose use they are principally intended, will here find something exactly suited to his exter-

nal circumstances, and the devotional feelings of his mind.

The less perfect Christian, who has not yet made such progress in the school of Piety as the former, may also reap considerable benefit from such a book of devotion. It will tend to improve him in knowledge and practice, and be a useful book of instruction as well as of devotion. He may here be led to form just notions and holy desires, such as cannot but have considerable influence on his prayers and on his conduct.

The idea of translating them was suggested by reading Dr. FORDYCE'S Addresses to the Deity, to which they appeared to be a proper companion, as they are compositions of the same kind, "a species of pious contemplation, where the soul, inspired by a lively sense of the Divine Presence, expresses, with humility and ardor, her very inmost thoughts, affections, and desires on different subjects."

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

THIS little work of one of the most eminent Divines and popular Preachers in Germany, has been justly celebrated and admired. The German Journals of Literature give a high character of the original; and the English Reviews notice the translation (here reprinted) in terms of warm commendation. Indeed, all the friends of religion will peruse these pathetic pages with real satisfaction and advantage, animated with the elevated devotion which breathes through them; and will unite in recommending them to all, as eminently calculated to enliven the spirit and promote the habits of pure and rational Piety.

It is the peculiar merit of these "Exercises," that they are accommodated to most of the duties, the conditions and the relations of life. They may serve, too, to attract Children to their primary obligations; to assist Parents in their tender cares; to lead the Aged to the most

happy recollections ; to instruct the Poor in the virtues befitting their lowly state ; to induce the Rich to acquire more of those qualities which will enhance their enjoyments ; to soothe the Sick ; and to comfort the Bereaved.

If promotive of either of these good purposes, especially if beneficial in ALL of them, how ought this little book to be prized ! and how eagerly should every family be to possess, and every individual to peruse it !

Under this persuasion, the writer of this Introduction flatters himself that in more widely circulating the inestimable work, by giving a cheap AMERICAN EDITION, he is doing service to the cause of practical godliness, and opening to his friends a new and copious source of religious improvement ; and thus to do is his dearest wish, and will ever be his most zealous endeavor.

NOTE.—*In this AMERICAN EDITION several sentences, which appeared mere repetitions, have been omitted ; and the structure of others altered, to accommodate them more to the idiom of our language : And two EXERCISES on the LORD'S DAY, translated from the same Author, are added.*

THADDEUS M. HARRIS.

DORCHESTER, January, 1803.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF THE AUTHOR.

WHEN we take up a book, we naturally wish to know something of the author; who he was, where he lived, and why he wrote. We would ascertain his pretensions to our notice, and whether we may expect any particular benefit, new information, or increased satisfaction from his writings.

Or if the perusal of a volume, by an author unknown to us, has served to instruct and improve us, to make us wiser and better, to elevate our piety, and increase our happiness, we feel a real obligation, a sense of becoming gratitude, and are particularly desirous of knowing to whom we are indebted; we have even contracted an affection, a friendship, for our judicious instructor — and friends should be well acquainted.

To gratify this laudable curiosity, in those who have the inclination to purchase, and the good sense to peruse this little book, pains have been taken to collect some account of the worthy author.

GEORGE JOACHIM ZOLLIKOFER was born at St. Gall, in Switzerland, on the 5th of August, 1730. His father, DAVID ANTHONY ZOLLIKOFER, is still remembered there as an eminent practitioner in the law, and as a pious and upright man. That he omitted nothing in the literary education of his son may well be imagined; it is still more manifest that by his own virtuous example he became his moral tutor, a tutor to whom posterity is under such infinite obligations through his pupil.

Young ZOLLIKOFER, when arrived at the proper age, was put to the gymnasium of his native town; from whence, being intended for the church, he was sent to prosecute his studies, first at Bremen, and afterwards at the university of Utrecht, where the divinity professors are said to have been then in high repute.

Possessing native genius, a clear intellect, and an elevated fancy, with a close attachment to learning, and an ardent ambition to excel, as might be expected, he made great improvements, and became an accomplished scholar. He was well versed in History, Biography, Poetry, and all the branches of Polite Literature: He was fond of these pursuits, for they enlarged his mind, corrected his taste, and refined his native sensibilities. In Natural History and Natural Philosophy, also, he is said to have possessed uncommon knowledge. But Ethics and Divinity were his favorite studies, for they belonged to the profession to which he had devoted all his regards, all his exertions, and all his talents. In this profession he was unrivalled. His compositions, always judicious, correct, and pathetic, were delivered with all the advantages of a fine voice, a graceful figure, and an irresistible eloquence.

His first establishment as a Preacher, which was soon after he had completed his academical course, was in his own country, at Murten, in the Pays de Vaud. Here, however, he remained only a short time, having a call to a more considerable place at Monstein, in the Grisons. This congregation, likewise, had not the happiness to possess him for a much longer period, he being invited to Isenburg as a preacher there. Yet neither was this station the theatre which Providence had determined for his most extensive and permanent usefulness. In the year 1758, at the age of eight and twenty, he was appointed to the office of one of the German preachers at the reformed church at Leipsic. This was a conspicuous station, and Mr. ZOLLIKOFER filled it with eminent advantage. That he was universally admired and celebrated, is his least

praise ; his ministerial labors, his instructions, and his example, diffused far around the knowledge and beauties of holiness ; while his most excellent publications will spread through every country and age fresh excitements and encouragements to virtue and piety.

Several volumes of his incomparable discourses have been for some years in the hands of the public, and are in high and deserved repute. Not only have they passed through many editions in their original language, but they have been translated into French, Italian, and English, and are continually reprinting.

Honored by the wise, beloved by the good, respected and venerated by all classes ;—delighted in by the young as a candid, kind, and faithful adviser ; resorted to by the poor as a bountiful helper and patron ; sent for by the sick and afflicted as their best earthly comforter ; wholly occupied with religious duties and with humane and pious exercises, he spent an useful and honorable life, and left behind him a reputation unblemished and a fame immortal.

He was twice married. His first wife, named LE ROY, was a lady of great understanding and considerable attainments. He was extremely fond of her, and his congregation witnessed the manly tears he shed upon her grave. His second, of the family of SECHEHAY, at Leipsic, was an uncommon blessing to him during the last seven years of his life, and probably the world is indebted to her endearing attentions that his life and labors were so far prolonged. Both marriages were childless : Providence, doubtless for some wise purposes unknown to us, not dispensing to the man who had thought and read so much on the nurture and education of youth, and author of several pieces on the subject, the happiness of applying his wise and excellent lessons to practice.

For the space of a year before his death, feeling his faculties considerably on the decline, and thinking himself no longer able to fulfil the duties of his office to his own satis-

faction, he formed the resolution to lay it down, and retire to the place of his nativity in Switzerland: but at the united request of his congregation, who assured him that they would willingly content themselves with a discourse from him every fortnight, he was induced to remain in his station. His health even seemed to improve during the summer, in consequence of his having passed the intervals of his time at the village of Gohlitz, not far from town. But in the following autumn, it too plainly appeared that his recovery was only apparent. He still, however, attended on the duties of his office, though with the utmost difficulty; till, at length, a few weeks before his death, he was obliged to apply for assistance to a candidate for orders, who kindly took upon him the charge of preaching. His last illness was extremely painful, yet he bore his sufferings with the patience of a wise man, and the resignation of a Christian who looks beyond the grave and corruption to a world of retribution. On the 22d of January, 1788, he gently sunk into the arms of death, and was interred on the 25th. The whole of his numerous congregation, together with some hundreds of students at the University, and numbers of his auditors of the Lutheran communion, attended his body to the grave with every token of unfeigned sorrow.

EXERCISES OF PIETY.

INTRODUCTION.

REFLECTION is the mother of Wisdom, the faithful companion of Virtue, and the principal source of human felicity. The wisest and most virtuous of men have always considered it in this view, and to this day no one calls in question the truth of the encomium.

But, notwithstanding the acknowledged advantages of reflection, many persons scarcely ever reflect at all; and the greater part of mankind regard this employment as difficult and burdensome. We *think* continually, and without intermission. Thought

is as necessary to the life of the soul as motion is to that of the body. They are both equally involuntary. It is as impossible entirely to banish thought, as to stop the circulation of the blood. The objects which surround us, and the changes which take place within us, are continually making impressions upon us, which the mind presents to itself with more or less distinctness, and which it approves or disapproves. And this operation is performed in sleeping and waking, at rest and in action, in society and in solitude. We never cease, therefore, to *think*, any more than we cease to *breathe*. But we generally think with such rapidity and inattention, that our ideas are effaced as easily as they are produced, and leave no sensible traces behind them.

We often *think*, then, without *reflecting*; and it is seldom we examine with attention what have been our thoughts. Hence arise the little certainty, order, and consistency we observe in our ideas—hence the slight

conviction they produce ; the inconsistency and fickleness of our opinions and judgments, and the opposition that is often seen between our light and our conduct, our manner of thinking and manner of acting. To remove these defects, it is necessary to habituate ourselves to reflection, and to familiarize our minds to so noble and useful an employment. To reflect, as the very expression intimates, is to throw back the thoughts upon themselves, to return to a thought we have already had, and to think upon it a *second time*. A person who reflects, stops, and fixes upon one idea — considers it at leisure, and with attention — analyzes it in order to discover, more distinctly, the nature of the object on which he meditates, to trace it in its causes and effects, and to draw consequences from it relating to his conduct and happiness.

It is by means of such reflection that our ideas, and the knowledge we have acquired, become more clear, complete, cer-

tain, interesting, and useful to us : And such will be the daily employment of every one who zealously aspires after wisdom, virtue, and happiness.

Properly speaking, there is no subject upon which we cannot reflect. The field of contemplation is immense. The heavens and the earth ; creatures, animate and inanimate ; the present and the future — every thing invites to reflection ; and happy is that man, whose faculties of mind, and whose leisure, permit him to meditate on all the variety of objects around him, and to taste the pleasures of reflection, to the greatest extent. But this can be only the privilege of a few ; it therefore becomes necessary for us to make a judicious selection and choice of subjects on which to fix our attention ; for every exercise of reflection cannot be equally necessary and useful for us.

What then are the objects with which it most concerns us to be acquainted, and

what are the subjects on which it chiefly concerns us to reflect?

If we would fix our attention on subjects which are most interesting, we must reflect on the existence and providence of **GOD**, on **Jesus Christ** and **Christianity**, on the immortality of the soul, and a future state of retribution.

REFLECTIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

WHAT is the eternal and inexhaustible source, whence flow the streams of light and life, which diffuse themselves over all worlds, and all the orders of beings which inhabit them? What is the universal and incessantly active principle which animates and gives life to all, from which the powers of nature proceed, and by which they are continually renewed?

Where is the first cause of all that I behold? I see nothing around me but effects which owe their origin to other effects. Every thing is produced by another, and is itself produced in its turn by others. All things are connected and linked together. Does not this connection necessarily lead

me up to a first cause, eternal, independent, self-existent; who always did, and always will, continue to exist? Where is the first link of this immense chain, and the Almighty Hand that holds it?

Can I doubt that this first cause is infinitely wise, intelligent, and good? Do I not everywhere see the sensible and striking traces of intelligence, wisdom, and benevolence—the appearances of order, harmony, beauty, design, and means, proper to execute those designs? Who hath assigned to the sun, the moon, the stars, and all those thousands of worlds with which I am surrounded, the places they occupy, and the circles they run? Who hath so magnificently adorned the place of my abode, and spread so much life and pleasure amongst its inhabitants? What a variety and multitude of plants, insects, and animals, cover the face of the globe, all of which, by their structure, their instincts, their modes of life, their labors, and their

relation to each other, proclaim the consummate ability, and perfect wisdom, of Him who created them! How wonderful the manner in which they multiply themselves from age to age, without ever altering or confounding their species! Must I not do violence to my understanding, to consider all this as the effect of chance, or of a blind and unintelligent cause?

And where is the first, supreme intelligence, the Father of Spirits, who hath created me, and all other thinking and reasonable creatures? For I have not always thought. I have existed but a short time, and am equally ignorant how I think, and how I began to think. I am sensible it is not in myself that I must seek for the true cause of my existence. It is not to the immediate authors I am indebted for it. They know not how I exist, and the cause of their own existence is no more in themselves than mine is in me. Every thing informs me, also, that my intelligent nature

cannot be the work of chance, the effect of the sensible objects which surround me, nor of the gross materials to which I am united. The order, the connection, and the harmony which prevail in my thoughts, will not suffer me to believe it. I cannot but observe that my mind is of a much nobler origin, and is of a nature far superior to the body which serves for its covering. I perceive that my soul is the work of a Being superior to all those which I see around me — that it proceeds from an immaterial, intelligent principle, by whom it lives and thinks, and to whom it is most intimately related.

To believe that there is a first, eternal cause of all things, an intelligence supreme and perfect, is to admit a truth, the conviction of which is necessary to relieve and tranquillize my heart ; and the clearer my ideas on this subject, and the more attention I pay to what passes within and without me, the more clearly I hear the

voice of nature, which announces to me a Deity.

O thou Being of Beings, infinite, eternal ; heaven and earth proclaim thy existence ! Every leaf, every plant, every tree, every insect, every worm that crawleth on the ground, every living and rational creature speaks of Thee. Every thing that exists and thinks, celebrates thy praise. I behold Thee in the brightness of the firmament—in the mild light which surrounds, and in the vital heat which pervades all animate beings ! It is Thee I hear in the soft murmurs of the air, in the salutary blowing of the winds, in the rustling noise of the leaves, in the melodious song of birds, in the intelligible language of men, in the roaring waves of the sea, and in the thundering voice of the tempest. It is Thee whom I perceive in the impressions which external objects make upon me, and in the pleasing, and sometimes rapturous feelings which arise from the knowledge of

truth, the practice of virtue, and the expectation of a happy futurity.

All that exist, live, think and act, inform me there is a GOD, an universal principle, an eternal source of life, motion, and thought. Yes, great GOD ! Thou wast, and art, and art to come, from everlasting, and to everlasting.

How happy am I in knowing Thee, and in being able, on the wings of thought, to elevate myself to Thee ! What would the whole world be without Thee ? — a confused, inexplicable mystery. Our intelligent minds would be involved in frightful darkness, and all our thoughts, knowledge, actions, and enjoyments, would lose all their charms, together with all their use. If all were but the sport of chance, what hopes could we cherish in our bosoms ; to what fears should we not become the prey ? On what could we, with any confidence rely ? What principles could safely guide us in the search of truth, and in the conduct of life ?

If I did not know that thou, O GOD, dost exist, I could scarce restrain myself from envying the brutes. In this case, the power of thinking, and of ascending from effect to cause, would be to me a fatal present, and life a burden. No—it is such a Being as thyself alone which could give me a mind capable of conceiving of Thee, and a heart burning with a desire to know Thee, without whom I can enjoy no true felicity.

By believing in *thy* existence, I perceive the whole value of my *own*. The idea that I am, that I think and live, and that I owe these advantages to Thee, fills me with joy unspeakable. I am no longer an unconnected individual, lost amidst the multitude of living beings. I am no longer an effect without a cause. I am the workmanship of sovereign wisdom and benevolence; the creature of Him who hath created, and who preserves all beings, and all worlds; the child of the com-

mon parent of the immense family which fills the heavens and the earth.

Yes, O my God, little as I appear in comparison with the vast universe, I am as much thy work as the sun, and all the worlds which revolve in the immensity of space. I am as much thy child as the most exalted intelligences which encircle thy throne. To thine eyes, thou eternal and infinite Being, all the distinctions which are made by men between what they call great and little disappear. All that comes out of thine hands, is worthy of Thee, and bears the impression of thy infinite wisdom and power.

What a light is now reflected on all things around me! All is good and perfect in its kind. Every thing is what it ought to be in the place it occupies, and according to its design, for all that exists is the work of the wisest and the best of Beings. The universe is an immense whole, all whose parts, closely connected

together, promote the wisest and most important ends.

What contentment and tranquillity now reign in my heart ! I know the object of my faith and hope. I know from whence I came, by whom I exist, in whom I may rejoice, and on whom I can rely. I know that thou livest, O my God ; that thou art my Creator and my Father, and the Creator and Father of all men, and of all beings, and will be forever. May nothing ever deprive me of this lively and delightful conviction. Father of Mercies ! strengthen and increase my faith. May I be daily more and more convinced of thine existence, and adorable perfections ; and, filled with this idea, may it become to me a constant source of happiness.

ON PROVIDENCE.

IF GOD exists—and can I doubt of it whilst the heavens and the earth, all that is within me and without me proclaims this truth?—If there is a first eternal cause, a Creator of the Universe, there is also a Providence which preserves, governs, and directs the several creatures to their respective ends, and to a perpetually increasing perfection and felicity.

The idea I form to myself of the Supreme Being necessarily convinces me of the truth of this doctrine; and what falls under my notice of the frame and constitution of all things confirms my faith in it.

How can He who knows all things be ignorant of what passes in any part of his

vast dominions ? Must he not know the qualities, the abilities, the effects, the combinations of his creatures, animate as well as inanimate ? Must he not know exactly their wants, their situation, their wishes, their endeavors ? Are they not all in his hands ? Can any thing exist, live, be happy or unhappy, without his will or permission ? Do not all the powers of nature proceed from Him who is the eternal and inexhaustible source of motion and of life ; from Him who is the Father of our spirits, and the God of the spirits of all flesh ? And can I believe that God, despising the work of his hand, will abandon his children to the caprice of chance, and to the weakness of nature ? Can I think a Being of perfect benevolence can be an indifferent spectator of the series of events, and insensible to the happiness and misery of his creatures ; that Eternal Wisdom acts without an end, or cannot attain the end it proposes ; or that Infinite Goodness

will not do all the good that is in its power ?

I need not be surprised if the princes of the earth neglect the people over whom they are placed, if their measures are not always wise, or their administrations free from reproach ; and if, even with the best intentions, they frequently commit the greatest faults. Sometimes they are deficient in understanding and knowledge, at others in power or benevolence. Sometimes they are misled by error, at other times they are blinded by passion ; and they almost always sink under the burden that overpowers them. Their feeble sight cannot take in so large a field at once ; and neither their heads nor their hearts are equal to so many objects. But the eye of the Supreme takes in all things at one view. His understanding is infinite ; his love and paternal kindness are boundless. He cannot be deceived by false appearances—to him nothing is difficult ; his strength is never

weakened, and there is no place which his arm cannot reach. He sees all things as they really are. The material and spiritual worlds are equally subjected to him. He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. He doeth whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven and earth. No one can stay his hand, and say unto him, What doest thou? We have every reason to be satisfied that it is infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, which preserve, direct, and govern the world; all things proceed from him, all things exist by him and for him. The perfections of the Divine Nature prove this delightful and important doctrine; and what falls under our notice of the frame and constitution of the world, establishes it beyond all uncertainty and doubt.

Are not we, and all that surrounds us, as feeble and dependent this day, as we were the former? Are we not as incapable of prolonging our existence for a single moment as we were of giving ourselves

existence at first ? Can that which is dependent become independent, and subsist by itself ? Can the brook continue to run without its source, or the weak and feeble infant support itself without the tender care of its mother ? Is it not necessary that the Almighty Will which gave us our being, should be continually exerted to prevent our sinking into our original nothingness ? Oh, my God ! every thing convinces me that my faculties, my station, and the duration of my existence, do not depend on my will. It is thou who by a secret and absolute power maintainest my strength, motion, and existence. If my breath is not stopped—if my blood circulates—if my limbs have not lost their activity—if the organs of my senses have preserved their delicacy—if in this instant I have the faculty of thinking, and the use of my reason, it is to Thee alone that I am indebted for this continued blessing. These expressions in thy holy word then

are as true as they are beautiful. "All thy creatures wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season—that thou givest them they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good; thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust; thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth."

What does the invariable order which reigns in nature teach me; the regular and constant course of the stars, the wonderful harmony of their motions, notwithstanding their innumerable multitude, and the difference of their magnitude? What does the continual and well regulated succession of days, and seed-time, and harvest, and the inexhaustible fertility of nature teach me? Of what am I informed by the unchangeable relations which subsist between the different kinds of plants, animals, and men; and by the exact propor-

tion which takes place between life and death, between what is destructive and preservative, between the means and the end ? If chance, or a blind necessity, could not produce this surprising and harmonious order, neither could they preserve and maintain it. Such constant regularity can only be the effect of an ever active Intelligence, which embraces and actuates all.

Great God ! I humbly prostrate myself before Thee. Thou art the sovereign lord of the universe, the great disposer of events, the preserver and father of all thy creatures. This is what all nature proclaims to me ; but thy son, Jesus Christ, hath more especially taught me to consider Thee under these glorious and consolatory relations. It is in Thee, my God, I live, and move, and have my being. If thou suspendest thine influence, I languish ; if thou takest away my breath, I die. Thou hast assigned to every one the place he occupies in thy kingdom, and hast deter-

mined the number of his days. Thou knowest all my wants, and thou providest for them with a wisdom and liberality truly paternal. Thou perceivest all our thoughts, thou hearest all our sighs, and thou weighest all our actions. Thou discoverest all the most secret wishes that are formed in our hearts, and there is nothing so concealed as to be unseen by Thee. Thou dwellest in light, and all is light in thine eyes. The darkest night is the same to Thee as the brightest day; the obscurity of the grave is to Thee as the splendor of the firmament. Thou art the ever present eternal life, whose vital energy and power animate and pervade the whole universe. In the heavens and in the earth, in every being, in every intelligence, and in the heart of man we perceive thy constant agency, O omnipotent Jehovah! of whom, and through whom, and for whom are all things; to whom be glory forever.

Thou neglectest nothing in thy vast

empire; thou takest care of the smallest as well as the greatest of thy works, of the parts as well as the whole. All are thy works, all equally present to thy spirit, all closely bound and subjected to thy laws. All are perfect in their kind, and all contribute to promote the greatest possible perfection and happiness in the universe. It is thou that clothest the flowers in all their magnificence; thou givest to the beast his food, and the young ravens which cry. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without thy permission. Thou preservest and guidest the worm that crawleth on the ground, and the sun which shines in the firmament; the frail children of the earth, and the sublime inhabitants of heaven.

How low soever be the rank we sustain among rational creatures, this does not prevent Thee from being our Father, and from watching continually for our preservation and happiness. Nothing can befall us which thou hast not foreseen, and which

hath not made a part of thy plan as a cause or an effect. Thou upholdest all that fall, and raisest up all those that be bowed down ; thou makest poor, and thou makest rich ; thou killest, and thou makest alive ; thou woundest, and thou healest ; neither is there any that can deliver out of thine hand : The very hairs of thy servants' heads are numbered by Thee. Thou determinest our destiny, and the fate of kingdoms and of worlds ; and all that thou orderest is righteous and good.

However great the plans, and however exalted the ends of thy providence, thou wilt not fail to execute the one and attain the other. How opposite soever the powers of nature may appear, how contradictory soever the wishes, thoughts, designs, and endeavors of men, what thou hast resolved on shall take place, thy will shall be accomplished ; and from all these contradictions, real or apparent, the most perfect harmony shall finally result.

How happy should I esteem myself in being the object of the wise care and attention of the best and most tender of fathers. How happy is it for me that I am not left to myself, to the weakness of nature, and the extravagance of passions ; that my fate is not governed by my childish and senseless wishes, but by the laws of thine adorable wisdom ; that it is Thou, a Being of infinite knowledge and goodness, who governest and directest my lot, and not myself, a weak and blind mortal.

With what calm fearlessness can I now contemplate the most extraordinary and frightful revolutions in nature and in society ! With what firm assurance can I look forward to all future events ! I know that thine hand directs every event, and that nothing can take place without thy sovereign will.

With filial confidence I commit into thy paternal hands my lot in life, and all that shall befall me. Foolish and thoughtless

should I be, to presume to prescribe to Thee, the manner in which Thou shouldst regulate my lot, the lot of my friends, or of all thy children spread over the face of the earth. Thou knowest and Thou lovest us all better than we do ourselves. Thou alone knowest, with certainty, what would be proper for each of us in our respective stations, and our several relations. Little doth it signify whether the path by which thou conductest us be obscure or light, troublesome or easy, if it leads us to perfection and happiness. This consideration alone should compose my mind, and make me say, with resignation, in all imaginable cases — “It is the Lord, let him do what what seemeth him good.”

It is true thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways. Our views are bounded by a small circle of objects, and we behold but a small part of the universe. But thou takest in at one view, all times and all places; all that is

possible, and all that really exists, the past as well as the most distant futurity. Thou seest at one glance of thine eye the immense chain of causes and effects in all ages, and in all worlds. What we consider as ends, are often no more than means to attain more important ends. What we regard as evil, is often only a preservative from evil, much more considerable, and even a fruitful source of new blessings.

Far, then, from permitting the least murmur against the unsearchable ways of Providence, I put my hand upon my mouth and say — Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt. The time is coming when my faith shall be turned into sight; then shall I be enlightened with heavenly light; then what I here saw through a glass darkly, shall be perfectly revealed. Though clouds and darkness are now round about the proceedings of the Most High, I shall then see, without any intervening cloud, thy sublime designs, the wisdom of the means by which

they were accomplished, and their connection with my happy lot. Then I shall sing, with all glorified spirits, **Hallelujah**—the Lord **God** omnipotent reigneth—All that the Lord hath done is good—Praise ye the Lord!

ON FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

IT is a true and faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The dignity of his character, the beneficence and innocence of his life, the sublime and consolatory nature of his doctrines, the disinterested manner in which he and his apostles taught them to mankind, the remarkable and unheard of treatment with which he met, his death and resurrection, the happy change which his religion produced in the world — these are so many plain and well known facts, resting on evidence which must be more than sufficient to obtain for them an entire credit and a fixed belief. And this belief is absolutely necessary for those who earnestly long for the knowledge of truth, and a satisfactory

assurance on points the most important ; and who earnestly desire to be confirmed in virtue, and enjoy a durable tranquillity.

How deplorable was the condition of the human race, before Jesus Christ brought into the world the light of truth ! How many errors were embraced, even by the wisest and most enlightened of mankind ! From what source could they derive that steady conviction, that firm assurance, that solid peace, those exalted hopes, that delightful confidence in God, which are the portion of the Christian ? The most absurd idolatries and superstitious customs, the most dangerous incredulity and scepticism, the grossest sensuality, the most dreadful misery and despair, had extended on all sides their dominion over the earth. And who will venture to deny, that the doctrine of Jesus Christ hath produced in these respects the greatest and happiest revolution in the world ; a change which all the

wishes and all the efforts of the heathen philosophers could never effect ?

Is it not Jesus who hath marked out and cleared the path of truth, of virtue, and of happiness, which so many mortals sought before him but could never find ? How many thousands and millions of men have arrived by this path into that firm persuasion, that precious liberty, that noble conquest over themselves—to that sweet peace of mind, to that contentment and internal felicity, after which they had so long aspired. How many are there at the present day who walk with a serene mind, and an unshaken confidence in this road, and approach nearer and nearer to perfection. Is it not now much easier for mankind to improve themselves, to attend to the voice of nature, to consult their reason, and to avoid, by the light of this heavenly torch, the dark and crooked paths into which men formerly wandered ?

How much am I myself indebted to the

Christian doctrine ! And how much happier may I not yet become by its assistance ? I am brought acquainted with GOD—I know that he is my father, the only living and true GOD ; a Being eternal, infinitely wise and good ; the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things ; the King of heaven and earth. I know that he is merciful and kind, even to the greatest of sinners ; and when they repent and amend, will forgive their sins, and receive them into his favor. I know that my soul is immortal, and that after the present life a more perfect and happy state, a state of retribution, awaits me. But I should have been unacquainted with all these things, how agreeable soever I now find them to the light of reason, or I should have known them but imperfectly, if Jesus Christ had not revealed them to mankind by commission from his Father. And how could I be so serene and happy as I now am, if I had been ignorant of these doctrines, or

called in question their certainty and truth. Do they not spread a cheering light on all my being, and on all the events of my life? Do they not give more stability, a better foundation, and a greater importance to my thoughts, principles, and actions? And if I obey the precepts of Jesus, if I imitate his example, if I am animated by his spirit, how wise, good, peaceful, and happy shall I become! How easy will the practice of my duty be to me! It will then cost me but little to gain the conquest of myself, and to live and die contented. With what zeal shall I do good; what peace will reign in my heart; what agreement and harmony in my sentiments, inclinations and conduct! With what joy shall I think of God; with what feelings of benevolence and charity shall I regard my fellow creatures; with what noble confidence shall I look forward to death and an eternal world!

And shall I yet doubt, after all that my

experience teaches me, whether this doctrine come from God, the Father of light, the Author and source of all happiness? Shall I still doubt whether it be the safest and the shortest road to perfection and felicity? Shall I not embrace, with a lively faith, a religion which, in all respects, bears the evident marks of a celestial origin, and which must appear so desirable to every man whose mind is free from prejudice, and whose heart is uncorrupted—a religion which is so necessary to my tranquillity and peace? Shall I not regard it as the most precious gift of heaven to mankind? Shall I not acknowledge Jesus to be the organ of truth, the Savior, the Redeemer of the world? And shall I not testify the sincerest gratitude for all that he hath undertaken and suffered for us? Shall I not obey him with my whole heart? Shall I not cheerfully follow his steps, and endeavor more and more to resemble him, that I may be exalted to the glory and felicity of heaven?

O God, who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, accept my praises and thanksgivings for having called me to the knowledge of the Gospel, and for disclosing to me in the Christian doctrine, so much light, encouragement, consolation, and happiness. Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights, and consequently Christianity—which imparts to us such just and certain knowledge of thy nature and will; which inspires such perfect confidence in thy paternal bounty; which gives us the assurance of thy grace and mercy. May no tormenting doubts, no tumultuous passions ever disturb so pure a spring, and make me distate these wholesome waters of life! The most ardent wish of my heart, O my God, shall be to deserve, by my conduct, the title of Christian; to feel, more and more, the power of the Gospel; to enjoy its privileges with gratitude; to distinguish myself from unbelievers by wisdom and virtue, the serenity

and peace of my mind, and by these means to recommend the Gospel to their esteem and regard. Condescend to favor my wishes by thy wise and good Providence. Strengthen my faith in this heavenly doctrine ; and may this faith become a more active principle, and more fruitful of good works. Let the kingdom of the Messiah be extended and enlarged throughout the earth. Let Christianity be purified from all human inventions, and let its salutary-influence be every day more powerfully and universally experienced.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

ENLIGHTENED by the Gospel, I have already learnt to think and reason with more clearness and precision on this important doctrine. When a person has once got into the path of truth, it becomes easy for him to advance and pass on from one truth to another. The ideas which the Christian Religion has given me of God, of his infinite perfections, of his eternal love to men, of his mode of governing moral agents, of his will and designs; all these considerations lead me to entertain the hope of immortality. The Gospel raises this hope to the highest degree of certainty. Reason and scripture unite to confirm this delightful doctrine.

With a little reflection I can easily sat-

isfy myself, that what thinks within me — that my mind is of a nature totally different from my body — that it is a principle directed, not by mechanical, but by moral laws. I think — but I can, without any external impression, interrupt or continue my thoughts, divert them into another channel, or fix them upon any particular subject that pleases me. I put my body in motion; but I can, without any external obstacle, stop this motion, and give it an opposite direction. I exercise my will, and my will alone moves a multitude of bodies, in a great variety of ways. I communicate my thoughts to beings like myself, and by this means I can regulate their thoughts, and influence their opinions, designs and actions, without the least infringement on their liberty. No mere body can act in this manner, and thus raise itself above the laws of mechanism.

That which thinks within me, then, is somewhat totally different from my body.

I can lose a considerable part of my body without losing one of my ideas. My body is perpetually changing and renewing, nevertheless, I always retain the sense of my existence, and of my identity. How intimately connected soever my body and my mind may be, it does not follow that the latter may not exist without the former, and that the destruction of the body will necessarily draw after it that of the soul. Far from it. The nature of my soul is so different, and so superior, that I am persuaded that it will not perish with the body, but exist after the body is dead.

The consideration of my mental faculties, my present situation, and the relations in which I stand, greatly confirm this belief. I observe, in myself and others, the precious seeds of a multitude of excellent qualities, and exalted powers, which are capable of perpetually unfolding and enlarging their activity, and which yet are incapable of being fully unfolded and ex-

panded in the present state. To what narrow bounds are the faculties of my soul confined by the continual wants and occupations of life. How often do these things hinder me from making that progress which I could wish in the knowledge of truth, the practice of virtue, and the road to happiness. The daily laborer, the mechanic, the manufacturer—have they not souls endowed with the same faculties with the statesman to whom the welfare of a nation is entrusted, or with the man of learning versed in the sublimest sciences? Would not the former, placed in the same circumstances with the latter, be equally capable of the same attainments? And where is the human mind which hath received all the cultivation of which it is susceptible, and which would not unfold still more in more favorable situations? And is it possible that so many noble powers should remain forever concealed, and never arrive at all the improvement of which they are

capable ? No—in the government of a Being infinitely wise, there can be no such disproportion between the cause and the effect, the means and the end. Every one of my faculties, then, is a proof and a pledge of my future existence, and of the great things which at some future period I shall be able to perform for myself and my brethren. Every thing informs me that my present state is a scene of trial and discipline—that in this world I do not attain the end for which I was formed. Born into the world without knowledge, I must incessantly labor to inform my mind, and I have never finished learning. It is not without troublesome exertion that I acquire a facility of employing my powers. Scarcely have I begun to improve my faculties, to discover the footsteps of truth, to distinguish reality from appearance, good from evil, happiness from misery ; scarcely have I begun to enjoy the advantages my knowledge procures me, before the scene

of discipline and of mortal life closes. But is it to no purpose, then, that I have informed my mind, and exercised my abilities? Can I never make use of the knowledge I have acquired, and the faculties I have cultivated, with so much care? Shall I never reap the fruits of my labor and pains. Why all this provision, these many and troublesome preparations, if it lead to no end? Can such a useless profusion exist under the government of an infinitely wise **GOD**? Do not the schools in which youth are educated, previously suppose a state of society in which they are hereafter to be usefully employed? Is it to be imagined that a race of creatures thus furnished and fitted out, should vanish like bubbles in a storm? Can I believe that **God** alone acts without an end, and without a plan; or, that he is incapable of accomplishing the end he proposes to himself? No—if it be evident that all I see below resembles the means, rather than the end; if all is

rather begun than finished ; if it be certain that I live in a state of trial and discipline ; it is no less clear that God will raise me, after this short life, to new opportunities for making use of my faculties and talents, and for attaining the perfection for which he prepares me in this school of discipline.

What cheerful prospects open to my view, when I think on the relations in which I stand to God, and on the happiness to be derived from union with the Divinity. I earnestly desire better to know my God, and to be more intimately united to my Creator, and more and more to resemble him. And will God annihilate a being animated with such desires, who burns with love to him, and wishes to love him eternally ? Will he annihilate a child whom he has rendered capable of knowing, of serving, and of delighting in him, and to whom he hath given so many proofs of paternal tenderness ? No—he is my father, and hath already done too much for

me to harbor a fear that he will ever abandon me. He will not leave his work imperfect. He alone could inspire me with the ardent desire of uniting myself to him; and, as he is truth itself, he cannot fail to satisfy it.

But I am a Christian, and I have on this head the most positive promises from God, which entirely remove every doubt. Life and immortality are the consoling truths which my Savior brought from heaven. To confirm them he died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

How happy am I in knowing the Gospel—because he lives, I shall live also. Where he is, there shall his follower be—the more I imitate him on earth, the more shall I resemble him in heaven. Yes, I am immortal. The present is properly but the infancy of my being. It is merely preparatory for, and introductory to, a higher and happier state of existence.

O thou Eternal Source of being and of

life, accept of my sincere and devout thanksgivings, for raising me to this reviving and sublime hope, and for giving me the fullest evidence of its truth, by thy son Jesus Christ. He is, in truth, the Resurrection and the Life. He hath brought life and immortality to light by his Gospel. He hath conquered death, and dissipated the fears and terrors it inspired.

How delightful is it now, for me to think of Thee, O my GOD, and of the relations in which I stand to Thee ! Now I can hope to pass continually from one immense theatre of thy power to another, to be perpetually discovering new traces of wisdom and goodness, and to be eternally employed in admiring the works of thy hands.

A new and ravishing prospect opens to my eyes ; a scene of more noble employments, of purer pleasures, and of a felicity better suited to my desires and faculties. Here below I see things through a glass, darkly ; there I shall see things as they

really are. Here I exert my powers but in feeble endeavors; there I shall exercise them in the most certain and happy effect. Here I think and act like a child—I judge, I rejoice, and afflict myself like a child; there, arrived at maturity, I shall think and act as a perfect man. If my knowledge be at present confined within narrow bounds, I will not be distressed. I go shortly into an eternal world, where I shall make continual improvements in the knowledge of truth. The book of nature shall not always be a book which I cannot read; nor the Temple of Truth be always so inaccessible as I at present find it. I go to a world where I shall learn better to read the one and penetrate the other. How intimately is the present scene connected with the future! All that I think, all that I do, all that actually befalls me, has an influence on my eternal destiny. Now I sow. One day I shall reap. Now I labor, endure, and suffer. One day I shall gather the fruit

of my toils, and be recompensed for my sufferings. Now I prepare for enjoyment. One day I shall be put in possession. This is the time of trial and discipline—that of retribution shall soon arrive. And shall I confine all my thoughts to the present moment? Shall I choose and seek for nothing but what will produce an immediate gratification? Shall I be unconcerned about eternity? No—oh my God, I would live as becomes my celestial destination, and think and act as an immortal creature!

Oh my God! what is man—what am I, that thou shouldst condescend to render me capable of eternal felicity! O may the idea of the dignity of my nature, the nobleness of my origin, and the grandeur of my destination, be never effaced from my mind. Never will I forget that I am created in thy image, and that I am thy child. Never will I degrade my nature, and become the willing slave of sin and vice.

Assist me, O Heavenly Father, and let thy spirit sustain and strengthen mine, that, properly estimating the advantages I enjoy, I may learn rightly to improve them, and thus become happier through eternity.

Let my body wither like the flower of the field, and return to the dust, from whence it was taken. It is a coarse covering which I resign to corruption without regret. My mind, incorruptible, shall rise above the dust, and return to God who gave it. I shall one day be clothed with a more perfect and durable covering—a glorious and celestial body, resembling that of my exalted Savior.

My days now fly away with rapidity, and my life disappears as a fleeting dream. But what are a few days, and months, and years—what is the whole life of man to one who perceives himself to be immortal, and who is hastening to eternity?

No—neither death nor the grave can alarm or frighten me. O God, who hast

formed my mind, and made it capable of rising and still rising in the scale of being towards thyself; thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave. Death is only a passage to a better life. Whether it come this day or the next, I will commit my departing spirit into thy hands. If I die, O my God, thou wilt receive me unto thyself. By death thou wilt bring thy child from labor to repose, from combat to victory, and from the age of infancy to manhood. Sublime hopes—delightful prospects, be ye always present to my mind !

ON LOVE TO GOD.

O GOD, thou art love itself ! The book of nature, and the book of revelation teach this truth ; and my heart—that heart which thou hast formed to love Thee, and which thou hast made capable of tasting this exquisite pleasure—will not permit me to doubt it.

Thou art the origin and source of all the variety of beauties and perfections that are dispersed throughout the earth ? All that is great and amiable unite in Thee. To will, and to do good—this is thy divine essence. Thou regardest all the beings thou hast formed with paternal affection. Thou takest care of them ; thou doest them good. All that comes from Thee, O thou Supreme ! all that proceeds from thy hand,

good and evil, pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity, favors and chastisements, all tend to promote our felicity, all are adapted to exalt us to greater perfection.

I myself, who am so inconsiderable a creature, who am as nothing when compared with the rest of thy creation, I can every moment draw comfort from this inexhaustible source. In what intimate relations do I stand to Thee? Thou art my Creator—I am the work of thy hands. Thou art my Sovereign, and I am thy subject. Thou art my Father, and I am thy child. Can I be connected with Thee by stronger and more endearing ties? Can anything give a juster claim to all the affections of my heart than these natural and indissoluble relations give? And art Thou not the kindest, the most bountiful, the tenderest and most affectionate Father? Am I not indebted to Thee, for life, and breath, and all things?

How various and great are the gifts and

benefits which Thou hast heaped upon me, and which Thou still continuest to bestow ! All that I am, all that I have, all that I am capable of being, is the effect of thy munificence. Thy bounty provides for the wants of my body and my soul. With how many advantages, comforts, pleasures, and joys hast Thou strewed my path ? What assistance dost Thou grant to my weakness, with what indulgence dost Thou bear with my sins, and with what tender solicitude dost Thou recall me from my wanderings. With what wisdom dost Thou conduct and direct my lot, and all that shall befall me.

But how can I speak of the unmerited and inestimable tokens of thy love which Thou hast given me by Jesus Christ, through whom Thou hast taught me to hope for the forgiveness of sins, the aids of thy spirit, and everlasting life.

Yes, O my God, thou art essentially bountiful and good, and wilt be so forever.

I find myself as much surrounded with thy mercies as I am with the light which shines around me. I have daily experience, that to do good and to bless is thy eternal employment.

And shall I not love Thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength ? Shall not the idea of thy existence and amiable attributes become the most natural, and most delightful and consoling idea I am capable of forming. Can I think of thee, O my GOD—of thee who art my Creator, my Benefactor, my Father, as well as of all other beings—without experiencing the most delightful satisfaction, without feeling the most lively transports of gratitude and joy ? I rejoice in thee, O my GOD, I rejoice in thinking that Thou existest, that Thou art an eternal and infinitely perfect Being. I rejoice in thinking of the close relations which unite me to Thee. I rejoice in thinking on the ways of thy providence, on the manner in which Thou hast

arranged all things in the natural and moral world. I rejoice to think that every thing takes place by thy will, that it is Thou who orderest and directest all things; that all is good and perfect in its kind; that all is the effect and proof of thine infinite love. It is in this light I would henceforward see all things; blessings and afflictions, pleasures and pains, all that befalls others and myself. I will not forget that all things come from Thee, provided by thy wisdom and bestowed by thy love. My joy, my happiness, shall always consist in loving Thee, in conforming my will to thine, in resigning myself entirely into thy hands as into the hands of the best of fathers, and hereby strengthening more and more the ties which unite me to Thee.

It is true my gross senses, and the different ties which unite me to the earth, do not permit me so often to elevate my soul to Thee, nor to perceive thine adorable perfections and august presence in that

lively manner my soul desires, in the moments consecrated to piety ; but I will cherish the hope that I shall hereafter know Thee better, adore Thee more worthily, unite myself more closely to Thee, and love Thee with more ardor ; and then shall I experience, in contemplating thee, O my God, the most pure and most ravishing joy.

ON LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST.

O MY Savior, when I read the history of thy life, how is my admiration excited, my gratitude enkindled, my love inflamed, and my faith confirmed ! Whether I mix in the crowd that follows Thee, or join the small number of thy beloved disciples, to listen to the instructions flowing from thy divine lips — whether I accompany Thee to the temple, mingle in the company of thy friends or enemies, or go with Thee to the solitary mountains or the peaceful town of Bethlehem — whether I behold Thee surrounded with little children, or the infirm, the diseased, the poor, and the distressed — whether I hear those around Thee crying, Hosanna to the Son of David, or crucify him, crucify him — whether I contemplate

Thee acting or suffering, Thou appearest always the same; meek and humble, patient and resigned; supplying the necessitous, relieving the distressed, instructing the ignorant, and laboring with unwearied zeal for the reformation and the happiness of the human race.

How can I think of Thee without experiencing the most lively admiration, the most exalted gratitude, and the purest love? Thou hast heaped on me innumerable favors; Thou hast brought me to the knowledge of truths the most sublime and consolatory, and hast guided me in the path of light, where I find so much joy and satisfaction. If I no longer groan in the darkness of idolatry, and under the bondage of vice and superstition; if I no longer tremble at the idea of GOD, as of a severe master and inexorable judge; if I no longer consider death with fear and terror, as the termination of my existence and my happiness—it is to Thee I am indebted. Thou

hast opened my heart to the sweetest hopes, and has disclosed to the eyes of my faith the most cheering prospects. Art thou not my Savior? Am I not the object of thy compassion, whom thou hast rescued from perdition. Yes. It is by thy doctrine I am brought from darkness to light, from misery to happiness. Thou hast loosed my bonds; Thou hast set me free, and put me into a condition of rejoicing in my liberty. He whom thou hast freed, O Son of the Most High, is free indeed!

Art Thou not my forerunner and my guide in the road of virtue and felicity? Am I not thy follower; and ought I not to walk in thy steps? Thou hast smoothed the path of life, and ledest me in the way in which I should go. Conducted by thy spirit, I shall walk with a firm and steady step, and shall finally arrive at the mark to which Thou callest me. What acknowledgments do I owe Thee! To what height of felicity hast Thou raised

me; and how much happier still may I become by thine assistance!

But in order to procure all these advantages and blessings for me and for my brethren, how many hardships hast Thou experienced, how many sacrifices hast Thou made, to what humiliations hast Thou submitted! What a toilsome life hast Thou led, and what grievous afflictions hast Thou endured! Thou hast generously sacrificed thyself for us. Thou hast died that we might live, and be eternally happy. Can there be a more convincing proof of love than that of yielding life for our friends? And Thou, generous Benefactor of mankind, Thou hast done still more; Thou hast died for us who neither knew Thee nor loved Thee.

And shall I be so ungrateful as not to love Thee, who has first loved me, and who hast obtained such astonishing blessings for me? When I muse on all these things, I feel my heart burn within me; I am

filled with gratitude and joy, and I ardently desire more and more to resemble Thee. The thought that Thou art my Master, my Guide, my Savior, my Lord, and my King, and that I am thy disciple, thy follower, thy subject, shall be my boast and my happiness. Constrained by thy love, I will cordially obey thy laws, and cheerfully imitate thy example; governed by the spirit of true affection, every hardship is easy, every burden light. Command me to any duty, however painful and laborious, I will welcome thy will. Bid me take up my cross, and sacrifice my pleasures and earthly prospects, I follow thy footsteps with resignation and joy. I will take the liveliest interest in all that Thou hast done, taught, and suffered. I will rejoice in thy grace and benevolence to the human race, and will endeavor to make all around me acquainted with our obligations to Thee. I sincerely rejoice Thou art gone to the Father, as our advocate and prevailing inter-

cessor: And that Thou hast gone to prepare mansions of blessedness for those who love Thee, that where Thou art, they may be also.

Blessed and glorious Savior, accept our praise ! Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

ON LOVE TO MANKIND.

As GOD is Love itself, so his great commandment in nature and religion is fraternal Love. We are formed by nature to take a part in the pleasures and pains of our fellow creatures ; and the exercise of this affection for others, is the source of the purest and the sweetest pleasures to ourselves. We cannot with a generous heart assist our brethren, do them a kindness, and bear, on their account, a trouble or a loss, without feeling an elevation of mind, and an addition to our happiness ; and never do we shut our hearts to love—never do we open them to envy, hatred, and enmity, without disturbing the peace of our minds, and rendering ourselves more or less unhappy. So clearly is it thy will, O my

GOD, that we should love one another. So audible is the voice of nature which speaks in favor of our brethren, and which resounds to the bottom of the heart.

Thou, O GOD, hast so interwoven our reciprocal interests, our pleasures and our pains, all our employments, labors, designs, and hopes: Thou hast so connected us together, that it is in the bosom of society, and in the mutual exertion of our powers, we can alone attain the end of our existence, and enjoy all the happiness of which we are susceptible. Could mankind be capable of existing in an independent state, or, what is the same, a state of equality, the noblest affections of the human breast would languish and die without an object for their exertion; human nature would degenerate into savageness, and the solitary individual, lost to all sense of what is great and liberal, would know no happiness himself by having no interest in the happiness of others. But in that state of mutual de-

pendence in which Thou, the great Parent of mankind, hast placed us, an intercourse of mutual good offices is kept up, habits of reciprocal affection are formed, and general order and harmony promoted.

When I consider the relations which subsist between my brethren and myself, I am naturally led to consider what fraternal affection I should feel for them. Thou hast united us, O my GOD, by a thousand ties. The same blood runs in our veins ; members of the same family, we all descend from the first man whom Thou createdst, and we all adore Thee as our common Parent. We have all the same origin, the same nature, and the same destination. The small and great, subjects and sovereigns, are all formed from the same dust, and shall all, sooner or later, return to it. But we have within us what is more noble and divine ; a mind that can raise itself to the knowledge of Thee, and unite itself to Thee, who art the Fa-

ther of spirits. Endued with the same faculties, with the same corporeal and mental powers ; reason and liberty are our greatest ornament. The traces of thy divine image shine equally in the poorest and richest, in the highest and lowest of mankind. Subjected to the same wants, we are united by a variety of ties. No one can do without his brethren, or is sufficient by himself ; no one can be exclusively happy. Thou hast so interwoven our pleasures and pains with the pains and pleasures of others, that, without reciprocal assistance, we can neither taste the one, nor sustain the other ; and whatever may be our external situation, the great purpose of our being is the same. This life is to each of us the school, the scene of discipline and trial ; and immortality our common hope.

And shall I not love beings so closely connected with me, and who resemble me in so many things ? Shall I be cold and indifferent with respect to them ? Shall I

even permit myself to hate them ? Shall I not know them when I meet them in the garb of indigence, and the tatters of poverty ? Shall I be ashamed of being their relation, their companion, their brother ? Shall I treat them as beings of an inferior species, and withhold from them the affection and concern which I owe them ? If this were the case, dare I continue to boast of being a man ? Could I say that I perceive, that I feel the dignity of my nature ?

Can I, especially, sustain the character of a Christian, if I am not actuated by a sincere and generous affection for all men ? Is not the whole of Christianity summed up in love ? Is not this the object which all its instructions, all its precepts, all its promises are employed to attain ? “By this,” says Christ, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”

Every man, then, whatever be his name, his rank, his station, his condition, his coun-

try, or religion — every man is my neighbor and my brother; every man is thy work and thy child, O thou Creator of the human race ! Beloved and cherished by Thee, he ought to be so by me. No one ought to be indifferent to me, no one ought to be excluded from my affection. Far from despising and hating them, I will regard them all with that benevolence with which Thou regardest them.

Nothing which relates to them, nothing which happens to them, shall be indifferent to me. I will weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice. What interests my fellow creatures shall be interesting to me. The evils they suffer, the blessings they enjoy, are blessings and evils common to human nature, belonging equally to the great family of which I am a member. And what sight can be more pleasing to thee, O Heavenly Father, than that of thy children united together in love, having but one heart and one soul ?

If I am animated with these sentiments, my love will be neither barren nor unfruitful. It will direct me and all my conduct, and influence every action. I shall do with pleasure what it requires, and avoid what it forbids. I shall harbor no thought, I shall cherish no wish, I shall utter no word, I shall pass no judgment, I shall form no designs, execute no undertaking, and enjoy no pleasures, which may be inconsistent with love. Influenced by this generous principle, I shall cheerfully sacrifice my own personal advantage for the general good. I shall be willing to labor and suffer for others. I shall live to be useful to them, and to return the kindnesses they have done me. As far as I can I will deliver them from the burdens with which they are oppressed, or lighten their weight. I will remove from their path the stone of stumbling, second their good intentions, befriend their useful undertakings, and do all in my power to unite them more and more to

each other. I will countenance, as far as depends on me, the progress of truth and of virtue, of liberty and happiness ; and spread, to the utmost of my ability, content and joy in the circle in which I move. This is what love requires of me, and to these objects all my efforts shall be directed.

But let me now inquire what hath hitherto been my conduct in this respect ? What good or what evil have I done ? Have I injured or afflicted any one ? Have none of my brethren a ground of complaint against me ? Is there no one weeping under the wrongs I have done him ? Is there no poor, unfortunate person, whom I might have relieved, and to whom I have refused assistance ? No feeble creature, no sinner, whose frailties and faults I ought to have borne with ; whose amendment I should have tried by fraternal remonstrances to have effected ; and whom, instead of this, I have made to feel the effects of my anger

and wrath ? Is there no one in a low condition whom I have treated with haughtiness, no timid and modest person whom I have tyrannized over and oppressed ? Is there no one who, at this moment, is lamenting my conduct towards him ? Have I judged no one with too much severity, and reproached no one unjustly ? Alas ! if at this moment any one of my fellow creatures is shedding a tear on my account, or experiencing some disappointment through my misconduct, how can I look up to thee, my God ? How dare I call thee Father, and consider myself as thy child, if I have hardened my heart against the distresses of others ! Let me, then, draw to my bosom my brother, whom I have injured or afflicted, take from him all occasion of dissatisfaction, wipe away all tears, and testify to him my repentance !

I will do what I can to repair the injury. I will not be ashamed to acknowledge my fault and to correct it, were it my inferior,

my servant, or the lowest person, upon earth that I have injured. For the least as well as the greatest is my brother, the child of my heavenly Father, to whom I owe as much affection as to others. O GOD! confirm me in this purpose, and give me strength to execute it; and let the purest and the liveliest love penetrate and inflame my heart, and let it make me more and more to resemble Thee, who art Love, and who dwellest in Love.

LOVE OF LABOR ; OR, ATTACHMENT TO
THE DUTIES OF OUR CONDITION.

THOU hast designed us, O GOD, for action and labor, and Thou hast connected the greatest advantages and the sweetest pleasures with an active and industrious life. Woe to him who, forgetting the design of his being, gives himself up to sloth and idleness. Peace and contentment fly far from him. Dissatisfaction and weariness attend his steps ; shame and misery will sooner or later be his portion.

It is only when I make a proper use of my abilities, when I fulfil with fidelity and exactness the duties of my station, and successfully contribute to the public good ; it is then, alone, I taste the pure pleasures of existence ; it is then only I can with

comfort account to myself, and to thee, my Creator, for the employment of my powers, my time, and my advantages. Then alone I can look with an eye of satisfaction, at the close of each day, on the employments in which I have been engaged, and meet, with cheerfulness, those of the morrow ; and hope, as the price of my labor, for an abundant harvest. Then alone, arrived at the end of my career, I shall be able to recall the past without confusion and regret ; and the idea, that every day of my life has been marked by some good action, by some virtuous effort, shall fill me with joy in the arms of death.

Yes, O my God, I revere and adore thy wisdom and goodness in the natural and moral disposition of things. I perceive, and I am convinced how indispensable is the obligation I am under to lead an active and laborious life, and faithfully to fulfil the duties of my station. May I never forget this obligation, and endeavor every

day of my life more punctually to discharge it.

All my faculties, all my powers, O God, all my abilities, all the means of service I possess, are the gifts of thy bounty, are talents which Thou hast intrusted to my improvement. At the last day I shall be obliged to give an account of the use I have made of them.

Thou, who art the sovereign disposer of all things, hast placed me in my present station. Thou hast entrusted me with certain offices relative to the happiness of thy children on earth. And shall I not be heartily concerned worthily to fill my place, to contribute all in my power to the well-being of thy great family, of which I am a member ?

Thou hast connected me with my brethren, by an infinite variety of ties. I cannot do without their assistance. Every day they perform for me the most important services, and shall I confine myself to re-

ceiving and enjoying, without making any return ? I could not live but by charity, and shall I repay my benefactors with ingratitude ?

Indolence and sloth will only increase the burdens of my employment, and render them more troublesome and difficult. My power will decrease, and my faculties be impaired in proportion as I neglect to use them.

What shame, what remorse, what punishment does not the indolent man prepare for himself at the close of every day, at the close of every year, and, above all, at the close of a life entirely spent in trifling occupations, and lost beyond retrieve ! After having sown so little, after having sown nothing but bad grain, what harvest can be expected ? And if I have been the parent of a family, what a wretched example have I set to my children and servants, by my dislike of labor, or my carelessness in going through it. Those who surround

me are more or less influenced by my conduct, and will find in my faults a pretext to justify their own.

Can inactivity and idleness be consistent with love to **GOD** and men? Are they consistent with the character of a Christian, who takes a lively interest in the happiness of others, who loves to labor, to suffer, and even to sacrifice himself for them—of a Christian, who ought not to content himself with a conduct merely exempt from crimes, or a common virtue, but who ought to distinguish himself from others, by the brightness of his virtue, and to shine as a light in the world—of a Christian, the disciple of a Master, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of his **Heavenly Father**, and whose conduct was governed by this maxim: “I must work whilst it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.”

I cannot doubt, therefore, **O my God**, that indolence is diametrically opposite to

thy will and designs. It degrades, it disgraces, it unnerves a man. It is inconsistent with our own happiness, and that of others. It makes us unworthy of the name of reasonable creatures, useful citizens, and true Christians.

Far, then, from me be the disgraceful thought of indolence — the idea I entertain of thee, O my GOD! the recollection of my dignity as a man, and a Christian — the remembrance of what I owe to Thee, and to my brethren, all unite to engage me to lead an active and industrious life, to employ my abilities in a manner the most useful to others, and the most honorable to myself. O my GOD! impress these thoughts deeply in my heart; may these motives frequently present themselves to my mind, and duly influence my conduct every day of my life.

THE SAFEST RULE IN THE CONDUCT OF
LIFE.

WHAT is the wisest use I can make of the present life ? What road ought I to pursue, in order most safely to attain the end of my existence ? How can I most successfully prepare myself for a more perfect and happy state after death ? How different are the paths in which men walk ! How opposite and contradictory are the maxims they adopt, and the ends they propose to themselves ! Nothing is more common than to see them wandering in forbidden paths, and failing of the end they have in view ! To avoid falling into the same mistakes, I need a sure and safe rule which I may follow without danger, and an en-

lightened guide in whom I may entirely confide. But where shall I find either the one or the other, unless in the heavenly doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the example which he hath left us. Yes, He is the way, the truth, and the life. To him we must continually look, after him we must frame our lives; to his voice we must be attentive and obedient, and in his steps we must tread. Whoever follows him with sincerity and perseverance cannot go astray; but will finally attain the highest degree of perfection of which he is capable. May it be my endeavor to become every day more like him, conformed to his example, and obedient to his precepts!

Grant me, O Merciful God, thine assistance, and the aids of that spirit which Thou didst shed so abundantly on thy well-beloved Son. Thus supported and protected, I shall surmount the greatest difficulties,

and shall find my greatest happiness and glory in the practice of virtue, and the progress of holiness.

EXERCISES OF PIETY,

SUITED TO THE SEVERAL RELATIONS OF
DOMESTIC AND CIVIL LIFE.

INTRODUCTORY REMARK.

THE duties of social life are an important subject, on which the enlightened and virtuous Christian will reflect with the closest attention, because that the just discharge of these mutual obligations, which in every age of the world have been held sacred, is absolutely necessary to personal integrity, to the peace and order of families, the strength of civil communities, the dignity, improvement, and welfare of mankind.

In reflecting on the various duties of social life, it is proper to begin with those of the married state, because this was actually the first relation contracted, the first special tie and bond of union established in human life. It is the root of all others, and has therefore, if we follow nature, a claim to our chief attention and regard.

FOR A MARRIED PERSON.

IT is thou, O GOD, who hast instituted marriage, that mankind, by this means, may fulfil thy designs on earth, and contribute to the happiness of each other. He who without sufficient reasons, or with criminal intentions, refuses to enter into this state ; he who seeks to gratify his desires out of wedlock, manifestly opposes thy will, and neglects to fulfil his destination upon earth. He is a rebellious subject of thy government, an enemy to human life and happiness. This institution is assuredly one of those which bears the plainest marks of thy wisdom and benevolence. What connection is there which more closely unites the human race, and more powerfully engages them to blend their interests and their

views, to participate in each other's anxieties and cares ? What is there that more exalts, ennobles, and multiplies their earthly existence ? What is there which furnishes them with stronger motives to exercise and unfold their faculties and talents, and to discharge with unwearied zeal the duties of their station ? What is there which more strongly attaches them to civil society, and makes them take a more lively and active interest in its happiness ? What is there that promises more support and consolation in old age ; what opens more diversified sources of pleasure and joy, and raises more delightful hopes, with respect to the future, then the sacred and honorable state of marriage ?

Yes — this shall always be to me a sacred relation. I will endeavor faithfully to discharge all its duties, and cheerfully submit to any self-denials it may render necessary. Far from being ashamed of the nuptial tie, or speaking of it with raillery, and a blame-

able levity — far from blushing at the sentiments of esteem and tenderness with which it inspires me for the person with whom I am united, I will make it my boast and my pride to cherish and love that person as another self, and will never lose sight of the intimate relations which subsist between us, nor of the duties which arise from them. Far from choosing the state of marriage only that I may enjoy greater liberty and independence, far from being directed in my choice by external advantages only, such as affluence and rank, as if the qualities of the mind and the virtues of the heart, which are the most fruitful sources of domestic happiness were indifferent to me ; I will pay the principal attention to the moral character, a sound judgment, a tender, virtuous, and pious heart, as the most solid foundation of conjugal felicity, and will prefer these advantages to all the lustre of externals.

Instead of suffering myself to be led

astray by ambition, avarice, the love of ease and luxury, so as to lose sight of the chief end of marriage, and to consider children, which are its most precious fruits, as a burden, I will, on the contrary, believe, that the more creatures there are susceptible of happiness, who by my means are brought into existence, and whom I have led into the road to felicity, the better I have answered my design on earth, and the more thankful shall I be for having lived here below. Far from expecting to find nothing but what is agreeable and delightful in this connection, I will never forget, that its pleasures are indissolubly joined with the tenderest anxieties and cares ; and, that it is only by a voluntary subjection to the latter, and bearing them with patience, that I can hope to taste the former, without shame and remorse, and enjoy them in all their extent.

The more diversified and intimate ties by which marriage unites me to my

partner, to my family, and to society, the more zealous and active shall I be for the personal and general good of those to whom I am related, and the more ambitious shall I be to discharge the duties of my station. There is no kind of labor, application, and care, how burdensome or easy soever I may find it, how great or how trifling soever be its object, which ought not to appear important and sacred whilst it is capable of contributing to the happiness of those with whom I am connected. My desire and endeavor shall not be to make a figure in the great world, but to become useful in the small circle in which I am placed, and to taste the pure and tranquil happiness of domestic life. If no one ought to think, act and live for himself alone, how much less should the person who lives in the conjugal union ! If he be acquainted with his obligations, he will share the blessings and afflictions of life with the person to whom he is united.

(He will always open his heart to her, and communicate all his sentiments. He will endeavor to ease her cares, to lessen her troubles, and avoid, as far as possible, any occasion of discontent and chagrin.) Neither of them can be contented or discontented, happy or unhappy, without the other in some degree partakes. Mutual confidence will be attended with the most beneficial effects. A suspicious disposition is the bane of all domestic bliss. It is that poisonous leaven which infects every comfort of life, and converts the cup of happiness into a cup of poison, bitter as the wormwood and the gall. Far be from me, then, every illiberal suspicion. I have received a wife to be my partner till death. She has left her father's shelter, and her mother's love, and trusted herself to mine. For the confidence she has reposed in my faith, shall I show *her* none? Shall I wantonly grieve a bosom, that has no other receptacle for its own grief but mine?

Marriage makes it our duty to endeavor to correct each other's faults, and to make the road of virtue more smooth and easy to each other ; and this is another source of comfort which it opens to us. Of what efficacy ought not the examples, the advice, the exhortations and prayers, to be, between persons so closely united, and filled with esteem and love for each other ? We should act as guides and supports to each other, to warn one another, with the tenderest anxiety, of the dangers which threaten ; to assist each other in overcoming temptations, and to encourage each other in a course of piety and virtue.

May my partner and myself never forget, that it was before thee, O my God, that we first promised to be constant, kind, and true ; that the vows then entered into are not to be sported with, nor their obligation profanely cast away. A persuasion of this is the firmest bulwark of virtue, and the surest foundation of mutual happiness.

May we never neglect to pray for thy blessing on our mutual connection. United together, in mutual affection, to pour out our common prayer, as the offering of one heart before Thee, who art Love itself, and the Rewarder of those that love Thee, is surely the highest circumstance of satisfaction which the wise can fancy, or the good can realize. Assisted by one another's virtue, our good dispositions will be confirmed; and, where life, in other circumstances, would be a burden, it will not be felt, as divided between us. We shall pass through life, blessing and blest; and meet again, in another world, never to separate, or to die any more.

FOR A PARENT.

O GOD, the Creator of all men, and the Source of all happiness. Thou makest use of thy creatures as the instrument by whom Thou communicatest thy gifts, and even life itself, to other beings of the same species ; and by this plan Thou makest them partakers of thy supreme felicity, in the divine and heavenly pleasures of making others happy.

Thou hast permitted me to taste of this happiness. Thou hast given me children, and committed them to my direction and care. What a valuable present of thy bounty ! What an abundant source of pleasure and joy for me ! Thou hast implanted in me the tenderest affection to my feeble offspring. Thou hast made me as

feelingly alive to their pleasures and pains as to my own. Thou hast not left my children dependent on the cool dictates of reason, but hast urged me to the full discharge of my duty by the stimulations of an instinct more speedy and forcible in its operations than any deliberate arguments could possibly be. Thou hast engaged and animated me to do them all the good in my power by every feeling of the heart. This affection which burns within me, is a spark of that love which Thou bearest to all thy creatures. But this parental affection ought to be, like thine, a wise and enlightened principle. Its object should be, not an external and momentary happiness, but a true and permanent felicity.

〔 It is not merely to the subsistence of my children, to the growth and shape of their bodies, that I would devote my chief attention, but, principally, to the culture of their minds and hearts. It is my duty to form them to rational men, sincere Chris-

tians, useful members of society, affectionate husbands and wives, tender parents, good masters, faithful friends, and virtuous citizens. It is my duty to teach them to love their Creator above all, to love their fellow-creatures as their brethren, and to rejoice in the persuasion that Thou art our common Father. I should form them not only for time, but for eternity.)

This is one of the most noble and honorable employments, one of the most important and delightful duties which Thou hast required of me. I will sacrifice every thing, the flattering pleasures and the sweetest enjoyments of life, to this important task. No age, no state, no other relation of life can set me free from so sacred an obligation. It is *myself* who must discharge it; and I cannot, either wholly or in part, make over this duty to another; since it is impossible that an hireling should feel the same sentiments which animate the breast of a parent, and should be sus-

ceptible of the same zeal and the same patience. If I am obliged to have recourse, in this important office, to the assistance and talents of others, they can act only under my direction, and, as workers, together with me.

This duty is undoubtedly difficult and laborious ; but if, by thine assistance, O my GOD, I acquit myself with success, what a train of pleasures and advantages will result from it to myself and society.

To guide feeble and ignorant creatures in the road to happiness ; to teach them to make a good use of their powers ; to contribute to the unfolding of the faculties and dispositions with which they are endued ; to guard innocent beings from error, vice, and misery, who are exposed to a thousand dangers and temptations ; to throw the seeds of truth, wisdom, and virtue into their young minds, as yet open to every impression ; to cherish and strengthen more and more the good dispo-

sitions which begin to spring up in them ; to bring them acquainted with the design of their being, both present and future ; to keep them at a distance from the poisonous sources of vice and folly, and to open to them those of wisdom, contentment and joy ; to fit them for acting their part on the great theatre of the world, with credit to themselves and satisfaction to their fellow-creatures,—what a noble and sublime employment ! What a recompense will attend it in this world and another ! May I be more penetrated with a sense of its dignity and importance, that I may acquit myself with a zeal that shall insure its success !

Yes, to give my children a liberal and Christian education shall be my principal and my sweetest occupation. Every thing animates me to this duty—nature, religion, the happiness of my children, my own happiness, and that of society.

Am I not answerable for my conduct

with respect to them, to the tribunal of my own conscience, to society, and to God, who is the Father of my children? Do not their usefulness or unusefulness in the world; the good or evil they shall do; their happiness or misery, present or future—do they not depend in a great measure on the education and cultivation I shall have given them? May I not form the most delightful and rejoicing expectations with respect to futurity, if I have zealously endeavored to give them good instruction? On the contrary, must I not expect the most cutting sorrow if I have neglected this duty, or have acquitted myself ill in it?

What wish shall I one day form, when death shall separate me from them? What will then console me, and enable me to go with tranquillity into the state of retribution which awaits me in another world? Will it satisfy me to think that my children are sufficiently advanced to do without

me ; that I leave them a decent patrimony, or even considerable riches ; that they are allied to opulent families ; that I have laid the foundation of their advancement ; that I have smoothed the way to important offices, dignities, and fortune ? Will all this make me easy respecting their future lot, and give me the consoling hope of meeting them again in the mansions of eternal felicity ? When the splendor and pomp of this world shall vanish from my sight, what shall I then wish with the greatest anxiety ? Will it not be that my children may be wise and virtuous men, and good Christians ; and that they may persevere in the path of wisdom and virtue ? In my last moments it will little concern me whether they be in other respects rich or poor, elevated to the pinnacle of greatness, or lost in obscurity. With what tranquillity shall I then be able to separate from them, and leave them under the direction of their Heavenly Father !

And shall I not at present aspire, shall I not incessantly strive to obtain this end ? Shall I not do all in my power to attain it, and to procure for myself so delightful a satisfaction on the bed of death ?

It is true, the most careful education will not always succeed. The most precious seed may be choked by bad examples, by the seduction of the corrupters of youth, or by the dominion of sensual appetites and irregular passions. All my attention and care may be useless ; but such instances are not frequent. Seldom does it happen that he who interests himself in the education of his children with a truly enlightened, active, and indefatigable zeal is put to so painful a trial. The fruits of his labors may not often discover themselves till late ; if he do not live to reap the fruits himself, they may, nevertheless, one day come to maturity. Besides, when I have given up all my attention to the education of my children, I have nothing

with which to reproach myself, even though it shall have been of no use. In this case I am not the author of their misery ; I have not contributed to it. How great soever it may be, I ought not to consider it as a punishment upon me, but as a disaster I could not possibly prevent.

Preserve me, O my God, if it may be, from this greatest of all distress. Gracious God ! Thou seest my beating, trembling heart ; hear the prayer of a parent ! Protect the feeble creatures Thou hast committed to my care ! Suffer them not to become the deplorable victims of debauchery and vice. Uphold and direct them, that they may never go astray and be lost. Make their path straight before them. Support them in the way of life, and let innocence, truth, virtue, and piety always accompany and preserve them. Let them be heirs of unfading glory ; let them be safe through eternity. O that my children may be heirs of God, and joint heirs of Jesus

Christ ! Should they be soon removed hence, may it be into Abraham's bosom ; or should they longer be continued here, may they be gathered at last, as a shock of corn, into the celestial garner.

Give thy blessing upon all I have undertaken with this view, and on whatever I shall hereafter undertake. If my feeble efforts are ill-directed, they are, at least, sincere. Supply my deficiencies, and grant me, O my God ! more light and knowledge, that I may choose the best means, and not be discouraged in the discharge of my important duty. Happy, inexpressibly happy, shall I be, if at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, I may be reunited to my children, never more to be separated ; and be able to say, in the transports of joy, " Behold me, Lord, and the children thou hast given me. They have, like me, happily finished their course, they have kept the faith, and persevered in their obedience ; and now they humbly wait,

with me, for the recompense which Thou hast promised to those who have been faithful unto death."

(With a view to all these blessings would I bring them, in the arms of faith and love, to the divine footstool, and resign them to the disposal of Infinite Goodness and Mercy. To that kind and gracious God who gave them would I humbly commit them, to be guarded by thy Providence, ministered to by thine angels, influenced by thy Spirit, conducted safely through the dangers and evils of this world, and preserved to thy everlasting kingdom in the other.

FOR A CHILD.

IN what a state of weakness and dependence, O my God, are the children of men born! When they come into the world they are much more feeble, much more dependent, much more exposed to dangers than the most senseless animals. It is but slowly, and very late that they acquire sufficient strength to stand alone, without the assistance of their parents.

But this arrangement is the effect of thy paternal bounty. Thou intendest we should be raised above the brute creation, and become intelligent and moral beings. But such we cannot become but by a constant intercourse, and the daily instructions of persons better informed than ourselves. And it is in order that we may enjoy this

society and instruction, that Thou hast so closely united us to beings of the same nature with ourselves, and placed us in such a state of dependence on one another.

I revere thy will, O my GOD; and I return Thee thanks for the ties which unite me to my parents, and all the advantages I derive from it.

Yes, I perceive how feeble and dependent I am, and desire to think and act accordingly. Happy shall I think myself, if filled with love and gratitude to my parents, I fulfil my obligations to them with a tractable and joyful heart.

How great are my obligations to them! What should I do without them? Surrounded from my birth with ten thousand dangers, I should probably not have escaped any one of them if the supporting and watchful hand of a father or a mother, or of persons who supplied their place, had not protected and snatched me from the dangers which threatened me. Exposed to

a thousand wants, without the power of supplying them ; a prey to hunger and thirst, to cold and heat, to sorrow and disease, I should have fallen a victim to all these evils had it not been for the assiduous attention of those who were around me, and their care to supply my want of knowledge and of strength. For how long a time hath this state of weakness and dependence (in which I still in a great degree find myself) continued ? A stranger to every thing, the least thing fills me with fear and trouble. My mind, as feeble as my body, falters at every step, falls into a thousand errors, and, dazzled by a false lustre, suffers itself to be easily led astray by vain appearances. I have not yet acquired sufficient experience to confide entirely in myself. To-day I judge totally different of men and things from what I did yesterday. Knowing but little the design of my being, and the means of attaining it, I cannot yet tread with a firm and steady

foot in the path of life. How much do I need an enlightened and faithful guide ! Without such a director I run the risk of straying into a thousand obscure by-paths, the victim of every impostor who wishes to abuse my credulity, and the sport of every accident.

But who amongst mankind will guide me with more kindness, prudence, and circumspection than a father or a mother ? My parents are the first and surest guides I can have in the journey of life, which is to me at present an unknown road. They will give me the benefit of their experience, light, and strength. They will warn me of the dangers I run, and remove the obstacles that lie in my way. They will teach me to distinguish reality from appearance, and to form a right judgment of mankind and the objects around me. They will raise me when I fall, and encourage my trembling steps. They will lead me insensibly to wisdom and virtue, to the knowl-

edge of GOD and religion, which they will teach me to study and to follow, as the noblest and most friendly guides to man, the most faithful and the surest conductors to happiness.

How great then are my obligations to my parents ! How can I ever acquit myself to them, and sufficiently acknowledge my gratitude ! How much have my maintenance, my early education, and the improvement of my mind already cost them ; and how much anxiety, pain, and labor have I not occasioned them ! How many conveniences and pleasures, and accommodations have they not given up on my account ! How many tears have I made them shed for me ! How much disappointment and distress have they experienced for me ! How much more have they watched, labored, and lived for me, than for themselves !

And have I never made a perverse return for their love ? Have I never repaid

their kindness with ingratitude ? Yet they have never ceased to give me new proofs of their tenderness, and never ceased to labor for my happiness.

Alas ! it is now I see my faults. The idea of having occasioned them anxiety and mortification, and of having grieved *their* hearts, afflicts and tears my own. I am ashamed that by obstinancy and disobedience I have hindered their good intentions in my behalf, and failed in my duty to them.

I will try in future to repair these faults, and to give them only satisfaction. To this my best endeavors shall be directed. Filial piety shall direct and animate all my conduct. I will say and do nothing that shall displease them. I will make it my greatest pleasure to obey them, to afford them every service and assistance in my power, and to become their consolation and their joy. I will give myself up sincerely to their direction, instantly obey their

commands, and, if possible, even anticipate their wishes. The end to which I will direct all my efforts shall be to make a good use of all the means of instruction they procure me, that I may become more intelligent and wise, and hereby make the best return in my power for all their kindness. Thus will I endeavor to lighten their burdens, relieve their cares, and rejoice their hearts with the pleasing hope that their labor has not been in vain.

Preserve me, O merciful God, from the levity and inconstancy of my age. Let the idea of thy presence, and of thy will, confirm me in every good resolution I have formed, and do Thou assist me to execute them with perseverance and fidelity!

TO YOUTH.

How pleasant is the season of youth !
Like the fine days in the spring, it com-
poses the prime of life, and promises in
future a rich harvest. But, alas ! it passes
away with the same rapidity, and the hopes
it raises are often as deceitful. In the
moral, as in the natural world, the finest
blossoms do not always produce the fruit
we had reason to expect :

“ Fair is the bud his vernal morn brings forth,
And fostering gales awhile the nursling fan.
O smile, ye Heavens, serene ! ye mildews wan,
Ye blighting whirlwinds, spare its balmy prime.”

In vain are our wishes ! Too often, blast-
ed by the hoarfrost, or torn up by the
tempest, the fairest buds of hope, and the
most promising plants perish, with the pre-
cious seed which they enclose.

How must it afflict the person, arrived at the maturity of manhood, when he casts his eyes over the days of youth, if they have flown away without improvement — if he has foolishly consumed them in trifling occupations, or lost them in idleness. What more distressing object can be held up to the view of society than that of a man whose faculties, instead of being unfolded and enlarged by exercise, are benumbed by inactivity, or debilitated or worn out in the service of vice ; carrying with him, into the maturer season, nothing but the disgraceful feelings of weakness, regret and remorse ?

On the other hand, what pleasure must not a person experience in recalling to his mind the spring of life, who has employed it in forming his mind and his heart in preparing himself for useful occupations ; and who, having cultivated the precious seed which the Creator has sown within us, can hope to reap for himself, and others,

the most excellent fruits ? How delightful is the sight of such a man to every sensible and virtuous person !

Happy will it be for me if I may one day taste this satisfaction, and procure it for my parents and fellow-citizens. Happy for me if I entertain at present the same opinion of the important design of youth as I shall certainly have in maturer years, and in old age, in the hours of retirement and recollection, and at the approach of death. But ah ! how different is the point of view in which manhood and old age see the days of their youth, from that in which they are beheld by the young man himself ! And how much more likely to be just is their opinion which is formed on their own experience and that of others ! Where is the man who ever repented of having well employed his youth ? Does not this period of life, when passed in piety and innocence, procure us the most valuable advantages, and the most noble plea-

asures ? On the other hand, how many deplore the loss or abuse of these most favorable days of their lives, and bitterly lament over the unhappy consequences of youthful errors ? How many are there who, in the flower of their lives, are a prey to the infirmities of a premature old age, become incapable of tasting the pleasures and comforts of domestic life, or to whom these pleasures are embittered and poisoned by remorse of conscience ?

And shall not these lessons and experiences, so proper to instruct and encourage me, make me more wise and prudent ? Shall they not engage me wisely to employ the days of youth ; to fly the steps of those unfortunate persons whose very appearance terrifies me ; to proceed with a firm and persevering step in the path where so many of my predecessors have reaped the advantages they now enjoy, and by which they have become valuable men, useful citizens, and wise and happy beings ?

The present is the season for sowing. If, at a more advanced period, I would not be reduced to the want of necessities ; if I would not be a burden to myself and others ; if I would gather a rich and abundant harvest, I must sow the good seed, and carefully cultivate the ground which receives it. I must adorn my mind with wisdom, and my heart with virtue ; I must lay in a store of useful knowledge, and early acquire the habit of acting justly. I must combat my evil thoughts before they gain the mastery ; I must extirpate my evil habits before they have taken deep root ; I must endeavor to secure the love and esteem of my fellow-citizens, by a rational, modest, attentive, regular conduct, that I may be able to depend in future on their protection and support. Youth is the time for discipline and preparation ; in this season I should acquaint myself with, and properly value, and exercise my faculties and powers, if I would one day employ

them with facility and success ; I should acquire the information and the talents for which I shall have occasion in future life, and without which I shall stumble at every step, and find myself involved in a thousand perplexing difficulties. I must accustom myself to self-denials ; to bear contradiction and opposition ; to endure fatigue, trouble, and affliction ; to subdue my passions ; to conquer my sensual appetites ; if I would not one day sink under the weight of every duty and every trial.

How important then is the present season of life ! Mere wishes, slothful and feeble efforts, will not suffice to fulfil its duties and design. It is only by persevering endeavors, by a constant application, and by an unshaken firmness, that I can attain the end which I propose. But need I be discouraged and alarmed at the necessity of diligence, application, and resistance ? Will not the wages be proportioned to the labor, and the triumph to the combat ?

Shall I postpone to an uncertain hereafter that which I can and ought to do at present ? Is not the time I lose really lost forever ? Has not every future period of my existence its particular employment ? Will it be the time for sowing when the season of gathering shall come, or for instruction when I shall be called to make use of my knowledge ? What it is incumbent on me to do at this season, and which I neglect because of its difficulties, will become every year and every day more difficult. Notwithstanding the health and strength I enjoy in the spring of life, may I not lose my powers, and die in the flower of my days ? And what doom may I expect in the future state, if I have foolishly wasted the prime of life in the slavery of irregular passions and the corruptions of vice ? Let me watch continually over myself, over all the secret motions of my heart ; let me not suffer myself to be seduced by the vain promises of vice, by the

charms of an apparent liberty, or a treacherous joy. Wisdom raises her voice to tell me that the intoxication of sense endures but for an instant ; that the enchanted cup of luxury shall not be always sweet to my taste ; that the pleasure I find in drinking it shall soon vanish, as a fleeting dream from which we are fearfully awakened ; that the liberty with which I am flattered by vice is nothing but the vilest slavery, and that all its joys are poisoned at their source. Whereas, no innocent pleasure which I forego, from a principle of virtue, shall be lost to me ; sooner or later it shall be returned to me with interest. A train of pure and lasting joys shall recompense me, in manhood and old age, for the destructive or vain gratifications which I have prudently renounced. And even when prevented, by an early death, from gathering, in this world, the fruits of a well-regulated youth, shall I not reap a prodigious advantage if I am prepared to

enter a more perfect abode, and sufficiently qualified for the sublime employment and delicious pleasures which await the virtuous in a future existence ?

Yes, O my God, it is only by keeping thy commandments — by making wisdom and virtue, reason and religion his faithful guides, that a young man can preserve his innocence, look with calmness on the beginning of his course, and advance nearer and nearer to his supreme destination. O may these faithful guides always accompany me in the journey of life ! O Almighty and most Merciful God, do thou thyself conduct me, by thy spirit, in the straight road. Preserve me by thy grace, from the wanderings of youth, and the tyranny of passions. Let thy wise and good Providence remove far from my path the obstacles and temptations which may occasion my fall. Assist my endeavors to become wise, and virtuous, and holy ; and accompany them with thy blessing. Place me

in circumstances favorable to my improvement. Give me faithful friends and guides, and enable me to follow them in the paths of goodness.

Thou delightest, O GOD, to grant the desires which flow from a sincere heart, and to second the efforts of those who seriously aspire after greater perfection. Supported and guided by Thee, I cannot fail of attaining in this world the design of my existence, and of arriving in the other at my supreme end.

FOR A PERSON ARRIVED AT MANHOOD

It is through thy goodness, O my God, that I am brought thus far on in the journey of life — assist me to pursue it according to thy will, and happily to finish it. I am now arrived at the middle of my course. Exposed, at the meridian of life, to the rays of the burning sun, I no longer enjoy the freshness of the morning. The serene days of infancy and youth are fled, away with all their playfulness and thoughtless gaiety. More serious thoughts and more important occupations, accompanied with solitudes and fears, but also intermixed with nobler, more delightful pleasures, have succeeded them. I am now advanced to the height of manhood. My body and my mind have attained all the

strength of which they are capable. I am now able to bear heavy burdens, to execute toilsome labors, to undertake things difficult and complicated, and overcome the greatest obstacles. The difficulties and dangers which terrify the young and the old, need not discourage me. The obstacles which make them stumble and fall, ought not to stop me in my course.

A greater activity, more application, a more unshaken patience and fortitude ; these are the true characteristics of manhood ; these are the sources from whence I must draw my means and advantages. Far be from me all sloth and inactivity, all indulgences and weakness, and the shame which accompanies an useless and effeminate life.

It is now time that I should make use of the knowledge and abilities acquired in youth. It is now that I should labor for society, and return the good offices I have, for so long a time, received from it. It is

now that I should become to others, what my parents, instructors, and guides have been to me. The strength and well-being of the State are founded on the useful labors, and beneficial undertakings of those arrived at maturity. It is for them to take care of those members of society who are yet young, feeble, and inexperienced ; and to procure rest, support, and recompenses to the respected old man, who has labored for the public good. May no employment, and no station, appear to me a burden, which tends to this end.

May I never lose sight of the different ties which unite me to society, as a father, a citizen, a friend, a child of God, and a Christian. May I never allow in myself any desire, any undertaking, any discourse, any actions, inconsistent with these relations, and contrary to the general good. Though I make but a very small part of the society, though I occupy but a single place, and that, perhaps, but a very subordinate one,

this does not put it out of my power to contribute to the welfare of that society of which I am a member. The public welfare can only take place when each of those who compose it worthily fills his station, and faithfully discharges his own peculiar duties. This shall be the object of my ardent and persevering endeavors. I would perform the duties of my function with a cheerful heart, and disinterested views, uninfluenced by ambition, vanity, avarice, or the desire of power ; but from obedience to the will of God, from a principle of conscience, from motives of humanity, and the noble desire of attaining the design of my present existence, and of preparing for my future destiny. These are the motives which shall animate me in the discharge of my duty, and make that duty itself the source of pleasure and of joy.

The course I have yet to run appears long to me. I form, perhaps, great and extensive schemes. I employ myself in

executing them with as much zeal and confidence as if I were sure of success. I labor for my country, for posterity, for a distant futurity. I plant, I build, I form enterprises, I enter into new connections, I pursue various plans, I endeavor to enlarge the sphere of my activity, as if I had many ages yet to live. To act thus, is the will of thy providence, O God, which has so closely connected one generation with another, and which prepares, in the present time, the most distant events. It is for Thee, O thou Sovereign of the world, to determine (according to the purposes of thy infinite wisdom) whether I shall leave the execution of them to another. Thou wantest neither means nor resources to attain the ends Thou proposest to thyself. As for me, may it suffice to acquit myself well in my station, and to labor, with unceasing application, for the public good, without disquieting myself whether my life shall be long or short ; whether the success of my

enterprises shall deceive my expectations, or crown my wishes.

But whilst my strength, ability, and success, answer all my expectations, let me never forget the frailty of my nature, the instability of worldly good, the uncertainty of all my schemes, the mortality of my body, and the immortal state into which I must pass. Far from concentrating all my affections in the pleasures of this life, I would never lose sight of my supreme end. I will therefore wisely prefer things invisible and eternal to those which are seen and temporal ; and always hold myself in readiness to quit my post at the call of Providence, and to go into another world, where, through divine grace, I may attain all the improvement of which I am susceptible, and to prepare for which I was sent into the world.

TO OLD AGE.

(O MY GOD, thou hast given me life, and continued it to me through a long series of years. After having carried me through the successive stages of existence, after conducting and protecting me in infancy, in youth, and manhood, Thou hast brought me to the last period of life. How great, how innumerable are the blessings and favors Thou hast heaped upon me ! O thou Supreme Good ! with what paternal tenderness hast Thou provided for my bodily and spiritual wants, from my birth to the present hour ! How many sources of pleasure and delight hast Thou opened to me in civil and domestic life ! How many lessons of wisdom and virtue hast Thou given me ! How many dangers hast Thou averted from me ; from

how many evils hast Thou preserved me ! How many faults and sins hast Thou overlooked ! How many undertakings and labors have I executed with success, through thine assistance ! Thy mercies have been renewed to me every morning ; every day, every hour of my life, have I witnessed thy goodness. Accept, O merciful and indulgent Father, my most sincere and hearty thanks, for all the blessings Thou hast heaped upon me, for all the support Thou hast granted me, for all the divine joys Thou hast poured into my heart, and for all the afflictions with which Thou hast disciplined and benefited me. But how can I sufficiently acknowledge and celebrate thy merciful kindness, and my own unmerited felicity ! Blessed be God, a day is approaching, when I hope distinctly to recollect all thy favors, and to be more sensible of their value. Then will the remembrance of my sufferings, as well as my pleasures, afford me joy. I shall acknowlege it was

thy paternal hand which has guided me in the gloomy and the rugged, as well as in the bright and smooth paths of life, in order to conduct me in the surest way to felicity. Every day of my life has been marked by some precious effects of thy love. Through thy grace, I have been upheld under the troubles of life, discharged its duties, and tasted its pleasures. I can now quit my post without regret, and without fear. I have finished the work Thou hast given me to do. I have promoted, according to my ability, the happiness of thy great family. Now I am going to rest from my toils, and to enjoy the fruit of my labors. Arrived at the end of my journey, what pleasure do I now enjoy in recalling to my mind every good action which Thou hast enabled me to perform. (Happy, indeed, would it be for me, if there had been no actions, the recollection of which should cover me with confusion. But, alas ! in reviewing the course I have run, I per-

ceive a multitude of faults and transgressions which fill me with shame and regret.] If I can yet correct my errors, and in any measure repair the injury I have done myself or my fellow-creatures, I will do it without delay, and with the greatest alacrity, whatever shame it may occasion me, in order to restore peace to my mind before I quit this state of trial, and appear before my judge. If I have neglected any duties, which I can yet discharge in my public or domestic relations, I will immediately fulfil them, lest death surprise me before I have completed my task. My sins and transgressions would overwhelm me with sorrow, did I not, O my God, consider thy mercy. Thou wilt pardon my faults, for Thou art an indulgent Father to those who repent and amend. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the security and proofs of it. How full of consolation is this assurance ! What light does it diffuse around me ! What hope and trust does it

inspire ! I will constantly look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith, my forerunner and my guide. I will endeavor to imitate his example, and tread in his steps. (If I can be no longer useful to society by my labors, I will try to be so by my example. My children, my servants, my descendants, shall learn from me to triumph over the fears of death, and to die as becometh Christians. An old man, who preserves to the decline of life an amiable serenity and easy cheerfulness, who recalls to his mind the scenes of past life, without remorse, and who contemplates the future without fear, such an old man may still be useful to society. How much good may he do, how much evil may he prevent, by his advice, by his example, and even by his presence ! The young, and those arrived at maturity, assemble around him to receive his instructions, to learn to live as he lived, and so approach the close of life with the same tranquillity of soul with

which he meets his dissolution. What deep and lasting impressions may not the precepts, the experience, the exhortations, which are the fruit of a long life, make upon the minds of others. Oh that the torch of my life may burn with a cheering and salutary splendor, before it is extinguished, and leave permanent and clear traces in the hearts of those who are younger than myself. To this end, I will endeavor to be free from the weaknesses and defects to which old age is usually subject. Far from me be all caprice, insensibility, austerity, moroseness, all peevishness, and impatience. May my principal, my last employment on earth, be to ease and lessen the care which my friends and others take of me, to testify to them my acknowledgments, to lead them, by my conduct, to respect, and love the religion of Jesus, and prepare for its highest rewards. {About to separate from them, I commit them, with myself, into thy hands,

O Heavenly Father, with an entire confidence. Be a father to my children, and a friend to my friends. Take them under thy protection. Lead them in the paths of piety and virtue. Preserve them from foolish and hurtful lusts. Teach them to make a proper use of the *present* life, and to prepare for a *future*. Then, whatever be their lot, whether prosperous or adverse ; whether they reach to my advanced age, or are cut off by death, in the midst of their days, they will not be less happy, and will be finally united to me, never to separate or to die any more.)

Thus would I finish my course. Thus would I spend the close of my life, relieving, benefiting, and blessing all around me. Then shall I behold my end with calmness and tranquillity. Death will conduct me to a better world, and will therefore be a messenger of joy. With a serene mind I shall go to a more perfect state, where I hope to know truth with greater certainty,

to think more justly, to worship more devoutly, to love more affectionately, to act with greater freedom, and to enjoy pleasure without mixture or alloy. Yes, O my God, thou wilt quickly call me to thyself, and I will readily obey thy voice, for Thou callest me to glory, honor, and immortality. Thy perfections are my security ; and thy son Jesus Christ, whose words shall never pass away, gives me the most positive assurance of it.

With a heart deeply impressed with these sentiments, I will say, as he did : “ Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.”

ON DUTY TO RULERS AND SUPERIORS

IF mankind are placed in a state of mutual dependence; if they have different posts assigned them in society; if some, invested with authority and power, preside and govern, whilst others are controlled and obey; if every one is obliged, for the public good, to confine himself within certain limits, to submit to certain burdens, this arises from the diversity of our understandings, abilities, and talents, and the unavoidable effect of social life, and is necessary to the general good, and advantageous to the human race. Without this variety of conditions, how could the union, order, security, peace, and well-being of society be maintained? How could the members of society make their faculties and talents use-

ful to the public ? How could they expand and exercise their powers, practise all the virtues of which they are capable, provide for their common wants, and execute useful undertakings ? And how feeble, and destitute of succor should we be, without social connection ? Do not these connections and relations necessarily suppose a mutual dependence and subordination ?

I here perceive, O GOD, thy wise disposal and arrangement. I revere and submit to them, fully convinced they are equitable and good ; that they tend to promote the general welfare of thy earthly family, and, of consequence, my own private happiness.

As those to whom Thou hast entrusted the administration of justice, the maintenance of laws, and the government of nations, are men of like passions with myself, and, on that account, frail and limited beings, a prey to error, and prone to failings ; liable to be deceived, and incapable of see-

ing, knowing, and executing every thing; beings who, with the best intentions, cannot do all the good they may wish, nor surmount all the obstacles they may encounter; I ought not to expect to find in them a wisdom and a virtue beyond what human nature is capable of. I must not be surprised if they sometimes commit mistakes; if their measures are not always so wise, nor so infallible, nor their administration so free from reproach as it might be. Can I say, that were I placed in the same circumstances I should not be guilty of many greater faults, be more deficient in the duties of justice, equity, and humanity, and more frequently prefer my own interest and pleasure to the general good.

All the arrangements and contrivances of mortals bear, and always will bear, the marks of human imperfection. If the advantages and good they produce more than counterbalance the inconveniences and evils to which they expose us, I will thankfully

enjoy the former, and endeavor to lessen the latter, by bearing them with patience. I will not forget that the obedience I owe to the magistrate is a duty which God himself hath commanded, the observance of which tends to the happiness of society, and, consequently, to mine, who make a part of it.

I will, therefore, respect my superiors, and lawful rulers ; and, whilst their laws are not contrary to the laws of God, who is my supreme Lawgiver, I will faithfully observe them, not from a motive of fear, but as the gospel teaches me, from a principle of conscience, and a regard to the general welfare. My obedience shall not be that of a slave, but of a rational, free, and intelligent being, who acts from the unconstrained impulse of the mind. I will give to those who are exalted above me in authority and rank, the honors and respect to which they are entitled. If, in the station I fill, I can in any measure

contribute to the general good of society, I will do it with alacrity and pleasure;—and, even when under no legal obligation, will endeavor to give effect, according to my abilities, to the useful and salutary intentions of government.

Far be it from me to envy the great and powerful. The places they occupy are as dangerous as they are exalted and brilliant. The path they tread may seem strewn with flowers, but these flowers most frequently conceal a multitude of briars and thorns, from which my path is exempted. They have also their burdens to bear, burdens which are often more oppressive than mine.

Besides, whether my condition here be high or low, bright or obscure, it will not affect my eternal state. My future happiness will depend on the exactness and fidelity with which I shall have executed the task which thou, O my God, hast given me. Whatever may be the station Thou

hast been pleased to assign me, if I strictly endeavor to discharge its duties, it will prepare the way to perfection and felicity. Grant me, O GOD, to this end, thine assistance. Father of Mercies, teach me to do thy will, and to discharge my duty, with all the attention and zeal of which I am capable. Then shall I always enjoy thy approbation, and in whatever state I am shall learn therewith to be content.

THE RICH MAN.

THE affluence in which thou, O my God, permittest me to live, undoubtedly procures me great advantages, and a variety of comforts and delights. It preserves me from many occasions of painful anxiety ; it opens to me many sources of pleasure and joy, which, without its aid, would have been shut against me. It excites me to a more generous activity for the public good. It furnishes me with a thousand means of augmenting my own happiness, and that of my brethren. Beneficent God ! it is to thy sovereign goodness I am indebted for all these important advantages, and I return Thee my most grateful acknowledgments. O teach me to regard and employ my riches suitably to thy will and my own

true felicity ! May I never consider them as proofs of particular merit in myself, and of thy predilection towards me. How many of my brethren, plunged in the depths of poverty, are more wise, virtuous and deserving of thy favors than I am ! May I never, in future, estimate the value of riches by the share I have of them, but by the wise, noble, and serviceable use I make of them.

If my condition hath its pleasures and advantages, it hath also its inconveniences and dangers. How many snares surround the rich man ! With how many pretences do riches furnish him for insolence, vanity, pride, effeminacy, luxury, and voluptuousness ! What risks does he run of violating the most sacred laws, of forgetting God, of indulging his sensual appetites, of despising the poor, of oppressing the weak, of hardening his heart, of becoming insensible to the misery of others ! How many snares are laid for his innocence and virtue !

Assist me, O my GOD, in the midst of these difficulties ! Enable me to escape these dangers, and surmount all these obstacles to piety and virtue. Ah, if my riches would remove me to a greater distance from Thee, and lead me astray into the paths of vice and folly, rather take them from me. I would infinitely rather be poor and virtuous, than live foolishly and wickedly in the bosom of plenty.

Yes—if my riches are prejudicial to my spiritual enjoyment, to my truest happiness and the lasting felicity of my soul, then, O my GOD, give me fortitude to free myself from an uneasy burden, by consecrating, whilst still living, a considerable part of it to support useful institutions ; to assist the poor, and those of my friends who are in need ; that the happy mediocrity to which I shall reduce myself by these generous sacrifices, may lessen the difficulties and obstacles which retard or mislead me in my course.

At least I am persuaded, and will always recollect, that I have difficult duties to discharge ; that it becomes me to take peculiar care to be on my guard against the false splendor of external good ; to redouble my attention and vigilance over myself, and never lose sight of those ties which unite me to God and man ; that by avoiding the snares which fortune spreads for me, I may walk with a firm and sure step on so slippery a road.

I will, then, inviolably observe the laws which reason and religion dictate. If, in the property I possess, there be any part which I have acquired unjustly, I would instantly restore it to its proper owner ; or, if none such can be found, I would distribute it among the poor. How can I enjoy with satisfaction, and apply without shame and remorse to my *own* use, what is not mine, but belongs to another.

Never will I make a parade of my riches before the eyes of others in such a manner

as to humble or afflict them. Never will I boast of them as an advantage which advances me above them. Never will I despise the poor because they are poor. Never will I treat them with insolence and cruelty, or forget that they are in many respects my equals and my brethren.

My acts of charity shall never be performed through vanity or ostentation. Far be it from me to reproach the poor man I relieve. He shall not be obliged to purchase my kind office by humiliations and meannesses. I would never, in an offensive manner, remind him of the assistance he has received from me. A look that speaks pity and affection doubles the gift, and makes the heart of misery rejoice. My hand and my countenance, therefore, shall give together. Thus, when I am asked for bread, I shall not give a stone along with it; and when I hear a fellow Christian crying out with his Divine Master, when expiring on the cross, "Lo, I thirst!" I shall

not have the barbarity to mock his distress, and double his complaints, by giving him vinegar to drink mingled with gall. To do good in secret, without a witness, without hope of a return; to do it to those who are ungrateful, and even to those who are my enemies, what a divine pleasure! It is to imitate thy bounty, Thou most benevolent of beings, and to be merciful as Thou, my Father in Heaven, art merciful.

Riches shall not be the rule by which I will estimate the merit of mankind, and determine the share they shall enjoy of my esteem. I know full well a person may be rich without any personal merit, and that poverty does not exclude the most valuable qualities. Did not my blessed Lord pass his life in the bosom of poverty and indigence? Let not me, then, his professed disciple, place my affections on the goods of fortune, or consider them as essential to my happiness. What is there more fleeting and uncertain, and consequently less

solid and lasting, than the contentment and happiness they impart ? How seldom do we see a rich man, truly contented and happy ; and how many persons enjoy real ease and comfort, without the assistance of wealth ?

I will never consider the use I make of riches as a matter of indifference. It is my duty to employ them in a manner the most wise and beneficial to society ; and it is much more difficult to discharge this duty than is generally imagined. I will not leave a matter of this consequence to chance ; and though in many cases I should pay regard to the circumstances of the moment, these circumstances shall not be my only rule. I will often reflect on the good I can do ; I will advise with my most virtuous and judicious friends, and give the subject my closest attention and care. The poor, the sick, and the unhappy, have undoubtedly the first and most incontestible claim to my assistance. But I ought also

to take in hand the cause of innocence, the interests of liberty, truth, virtue, humanity, and public happiness. These interests I ought to support and defend with so much the more courage and zeal, because I can do it with less risk and more success than others. This is my greatest honor, my most sacred duty, and my highest felicity.

Thus, shall I lay up treasure for futurity, become rich in good works, in generous sentiments, and virtuous actions. And though inevitably exposed to be one day deprived of temporal riches, I shall acquire others which shall last forever, which even death itself shall not snatch from me, and which will open to me in the future world inexhaustible sources of blessings and joys.

THE POOR MAN.

THOU distributest as it pleases thee, O GOD, thy blessings amongst men, according to laws supremely wise, but which are in a great measure unknown to us. “Thou exaltest him that is low, and abasest him that is high; Thou makest poor, and makest rich; Thou bringest low, and liftest up.” Nothing exists and takes place without thy permission; every thing is directed by thy universal providence. Let thy will be done, great GOD, for it is just and good.

Poverty ought not to quench my spirit, hinder me from enjoying the pleasures of existence, nor extinguish the sense of the dignity of my nature. All that constitutes human nature; all that exalts man above other terrestrial creatures; all that is essen-

tial to his true glory, and to his proper and lasting perfection, falls to my lot as well as to the rich man. Have I not the same faculties, the same abilities, the same hopes, the same destination as he ? Have we not each of us the same relation to GOD, our Creator and Father, and to Jesus, our Lord and Savior ? Are we not to meet together before the same tribunal which is to decide our fate ? Ought we not here to prepare ourselves for the same felicity ? Can I think that thou, O my GOD, lovest me the less because I am poor ; and that my poverty will be an obstacle to my future and supreme happiness ? Undoubtedly not. Thou hast, perhaps, foreseen that affluence and abundance would be hurtful to me, that they would become fatal snares to my virtue ; in this case, thy paternal bounty necessarily led Thee to refuse them to me. Possibly my indigence is a necessary means of preventing evils from which Thou wouldst spare me, or of procuring to my

brethren, or the public, many considerable advantages, which ought to outweigh my own personal advantage.

I will never blush then at my poverty. That poverty which is not the effect of bad conduct is no disgrace to any one. It is of no consequence to me to be esteemed by any one who would despise me only because I am poor. It is not the person such a man esteems or disregards, it is his dress and externals. Do I not also know that my indigence will not degrade me in the eyes of that Great Being who knoweth all things, whose judgment is infallible, and on whom alone my present and future happiness depend? Do I not also know that, in the eyes of every considerate person, an upright mind, and a sincere and honest heart, is of more value than all the silver and gold in the world? And if the wisest and most virtuous of mankind esteem me, may I not be unconcerned at the contempt of weak and foolish minds?

But if I have no occasion to be ashamed at my poverty, I ought not to seek to conceal my indigence from the eyes of others. It is by this that it becomes so oppressive and insupportable a burden to so many persons, who wish to appear different from what they really are, and to live like people who are in easy and affluent circumstances, without the means of doing it. Obligated continually to dissemble and disguise, to speak and to act the reverse of what they think, such persons pass their lives under constraint and perpetual uneasiness. They only make themselves more contemptible in the eyes of all those who see through their ridiculous vanity, and deprive themselves of the esteem of those who regard merit more than fortune. It shall give me no uneasiness, then, to own my poverty in all cases wherein this acknowledgment will be necessary or convenient. By this means I shall free myself from a painful constraint, and from many troublesome shackles ; I shall be at my

ease ; I shall live suitably to my condition, and with tranquillity on the little I possess. I can then, also, accept with gratitude, and without shame, the assistance which benevolent persons may be disposed to give me. But this avowal of my indigence shall always be accompanied with a proper sense of my natural dignity ; it shall be the avowal of a man who knows how to value himself, who judges wisely of the worth of things, and who has learnt to be contented with his lot.

To support myself with dignity in the bosom of poverty, I must carefully avoid contracting habits which are commonly found in my condition, and falling into errors into which poverty so easily betrays us.

Far from me be the idea of making use of unlawful and disgraceful means of extricating myself from my indigence, or of acquiring riches ; I should then lose the peace of my own mind, the esteem of good

men, and the approbation of my GOD — then, indeed, I should deserve the contempt and disgrace which the prejudices and false opinion of the senseless have attached to my condition. Far from me be all those indecent and bitter complaints which poverty often utters against the dispensations of Heaven, or the injustice and cruelty of men. By these I should offend my Creator and my Father, and exasperate my brethren against me. By these I should increase the difficulties in which I am involved, and drive from me those who might be disposed to assist me.

Far from me be all envy at the sight of the real or imaginary advantages which riches procure. Far from me be the contempt and hatred by which the poor seek to revenge themselves on the rich for the want of their fortune. Would not this be to pass judgment on the wise proceedings of Providence, to accuse an infinitely wise and righteous Being of injustice, and

to open to myself the sources of affliction and disappointment? Far from me be that discouragement, those painful apprehensions, those anticipated uneasinesses to which the poor sometimes give way. Little is wanted for the support of a man who knows how to confine himself to simple necessities, and who has shaken off the yoke of artificial wants. And hast thou not, O my God, an infinite variety of means to relieve my wants and extricate me from my misery? If I make a prudent use of my abilities — if I labor with persevering zeal and activity, can I suspect Thou wilt ever forget and forsake me; that Thou wilt permit thy creature, thy child, to want what is necessary? Besides, how uncertain is that future period about which I distress myself! how short and fleeting is the life of man? Why then should I give myself up a prey to inquietudes about distant events, which I may never see? Why should I disquiet myself about what may never happen?

However sharp and rugged soever be the road I am called to travel, it will bring me to the end I have in view with as much, perhaps with much more safety, than the straightest and the smoothest road. Full of filial confidence, therefore, O my GOD, I yield myself up to thy direction, and submit to thy will.

Am I not daily drawing nearer to a better life, where the poor shall no longer be eclipsed by the rich, nor the little trampled on and oppressed by the great—where all shall be tried by the Sovereign Judge of the universe and the Father of mankind, according to what they have done, and not according to what they have possessed—where every one will receive the rewards or the punishments he hath deserved. In that world those riches, which are here so much esteemed, will be of no value. There, those things only will be prized which may be shared equally by all men, the poor as well as the rich, and which

cannot be taken from us. The less I have then of temporal riches the more I should strive to obtain those which are eternal. Happy shall I be, when I quit this world, if I carry with me a fund of wisdom, integrity, and virtue—a heart full of love to God and men. Then may I rejoice in the hope of not having neglected the design for which I was sent into the world. Then I shall be rich—rich in spiritual and incorruptible blessings, which will always increase and always improve. O that, animated by these sentiments, I may labor with unwearied industry to acquire these invaluable and heavenly blessings.

This, O my God, is the only prayer I can address to Thee without restriction; convinced that what I ask is advantageous and useful for me, and that Thou wilt not fail to grant it.

FOR A PERSON CONFINED BY SICKNESS.

IT is in thee, O my GOD, I live, and move, and have my being. Health and strength are derived from Thee. Thou dispenseth these blessings, like all other earthly favors, as seemeth good in thy sight. As to myself, Thou hast favored me less, in this respect, than many of my fellow-creatures around me. I feel it, and have often
* wept over it with regret; especially when the weakness of my body has lessened the activity of my mind, and prevented my contributing, according to my wishes, to the general good.

But I check every rising murmur, and say, with my heart, as well as with my lips, "not my will but thine be done."

If my own excesses and wanderings in

past life have produced that state of weakness in which I languish, it is just I should experience the pernicious effects of my ungoverned passions and senseless conduct. These effects are a salutary lesson to myself and others. Yes, O my GOD, even when Thou strikest I adore thy goodness, and acknowledge that Thou art the wisest Master and the tenderest Parent. Without these warnings and fatherly corrections I had continued to walk in the road of vice and folly, and thereby become still more wretched than at present.

But if the weakness of my constitution be not the effect of my own excesses, but the consequence of circumstances which have not depended on me, I ought to regard it as the result of thy wise arrangements — as the effect of thy universal providence, which concerns itself in the smallest as well as in the greatest events, and which makes all things work together for the accomplishment of its glorious designs.

These designs are indeed impenetrable by me ; but I am persuaded they are as wise as they are salutary, and sooner or later I shall see that they are so. Thou perceivest, at a glance of thine eye, the whole of my existence : Thou perfectly knowest all that I am and all that I shall become, in the present and the future state : Thou alone canst dispose of and order my lot so as best to conduce to my supreme felicity. And ought not this idea to calm and compose my mind ?

But notwithstanding the narrow limits of my knowledge, I can, in many cases, perceive useful effects arising from the decay of my health. Even this condition may become to me a source of blessings ; if, instead of giving myself up to murmuring and depression of spirit, I improve it as wisdom and religion direct.

Who knows but, if I had enjoyed a more established health, I might have become the prey of imperious and disorderly

passions, and the slave of sensual appetites ? I should then perhaps have yielded myself up to levity, to a taste for dissipation, to vanity, sensuality and luxury ; and with more strength, I might have done much less good, and have discharged the duty of my station with less zeal and sincerity.

Is it likely I should then have thought as frequently and with so much advantage as I have done on thee, my **GOD** ; on religion, the state of my soul, and a future existence ? Would these thoughts have appeared to me so important as they now do ? And would they have contributed so much to have made me better and more resigned, as they have done ? At present the sense of my weakness engages me frequently to consider these objects, and renders them interesting to my heart, and a consolation to my mind.

Is it likely I should so well have known, tasted, and relished the innocent delights of domestic life, the noble pleasures of re-

ligion, and the attractive charms of virtuous friendship? Would my heart have been so susceptible of compassion and of pity? Should I have felt so lively an interest in the happiness of others? Might I not rather have become proud, insensible, and cruel?

Encouraged by a feeling of strength, might I not have deferred to an uncertain futurity the execution of things the most important, instead of being sensible, as I now am, of the uncertainty of life, and therefore improving the present moment with diligence?

How dangerous is uninterrupted health and a vigorous constitution! How prone are we to rely on our strength, and to sin under the idea of security. Into what excesses should we not run headlong without the restraints of sickness and suffering. Eager appetites, clamorous passions, hearken to no other call. The voice of reason cannot reach them. As full of suffering as

the world is, men still find courage to be wicked ; and the little of virtue that yet remains among us, is chiefly owing to this salutary discipline. Blessed calamities, that humble pride, that calm the passions, that curb each inordinate appetite ! Blessed sicknesses, that meet the heart in its wanderings, and bring it back to Thee, the only centre of rest ! Blessed disappointments, which afflict, but purify—tear and harrow up the soul, but prepare it for the seeds of virtue.

Without this weakness of constitution should I have familiarized my mind to the idea of death, and been armed against its terrors ? Perhaps the most distant apprehension of my decease, the slightest forebodings of dissolution, had filled me with uneasiness and fear ; and I should not have beheld, without distress and terror, the moment when my soul should quit this terrestrial abode.

If my present state of languor and weak-

ness deprive me, on the one hand, of some corporeal pleasures and advantages — if it sometimes expose me to sorrow and sufferings — on the other hand it contributes to my internal and spiritual improvement ; and this improvement is the only good thing which will follow me in the other world. What thanks do I owe thee, O my Father, for the Gospel of thy beloved Son, which in this scene of suffering composes and enlivens my heart with the certain prospect of a world where a body shall be prepared for me like to Christ's glorified body, not subject to weakness and pain.

What a motive is this to live contented and resigned, notwithstanding the daily feeling of my weakness !

No, O my God, I will offer no inconsiderate prayer to Thee. I will not ask for health, but with great submission to thy will. Thou wilt always give me what is necessary to my true happiness. It is not

for me, who am ignorant and blind, to prescribe what measure of health is fit for me.

If I cannot extend the sphere of my activity, I will at least endeavor, by thy grace, not to neglect any thing by which I can be useful. Far from me be all impatience and peevishness. I will endeavor to lessen the cares of my friends for me, and express to them my gratitude for all the concern they show me. The little good I can do, I will do with all the zeal of which I am capable. Though weak, I am not entirely destitute of strength; and in the exertion of my remaining strength I shall not be wholly useless to the world. Thou requirest from thy creatures no more than Thou enablest them to perform. To be what Thou wilt I should be; to perform what Thou wilt me to perform; this is my duty, and my supreme felicity.

O, my GOD, let these considerations, so full of comfort, be never absent from my

mind. Let them dispel the darkness of adversity, and influence all my sentiments and actions. I shall then never sink under the weight of my sufferings ; I shall never cease, in the depth of my afflictions, to respect and love Thee as the wisest and the best of fathers, and resign myself entirely to thy disposal.

ON THE DEATH OF FRIENDS.

It is thou, great God, who hast united men together by the closest ties. It is Thou who hast in such various ways interwoven our interests, our pleasures, and our pains. Thou hast given us as assistants, conductors, guides, and supports to each other. Thou hast inspired us with sentiments of love for one another. The tears, therefore, that we shed at the death of those who were dear to us, cannot be displeasing to Thee. It is thy will that we should love them, and Thou beholdest thy children with an approving satisfaction, when, answering to thy paternal views, they live in harmony and tenderly love each other.

But Thou wouldst have our love to be an enlightened and rational affection ; that

our esteem and attachment should be proportioned to the beings who are the objects of them. Thou designest that we should love that which is perishable and mortal as we ought to love such creatures ; that we should reserve our supreme love and chief regard for Thee alone, an eternal and infinite Being, the only inexhaustible Source of all beauty and perfection.

The beloved persons whose loss I deplore were doubtless mortal. Taken from dust, they must necessarily return to it again ; strangers upon earth, like myself, my parents, and my brethren, they must return to their own country. This is what I ought never to have forgotten — this is what I ought frequently to have repeated to myself, even in the moments when I was tasting the pleasures of their friendship ; in this manner should I have regulated my attachment, and have prepared myself for a sudden and inevitable separation from them. So true is it that if we were more

attentive to the paternal lessons Thou daily givest us, we should have no occasion for that instruction in the school of affliction and misfortune, which we might more easily learn from our own reflections.

The loss I have lately sustained is undoubtedly painful and affecting. The more intimate and sacred were the ties which united me to these dear friends, the greater strength and consistence time had given them, and the more habitual they were become to me, so much the more cruelly must my heart be torn at the moment the arrow of death hath just cut those beloved knots asunder, and the deeper and more painful will be the wound arising from them. But it is thus that all the ties which bind me to the earth will loosen and break away, that my passage from this world to another may not be too painful for me. Those whom I have cordially loved have only preceded me a few steps. Very soon, perhaps sooner than I suspect, I shall fol-

low them. Then the days and the years that I have passed in their absence will appear to me as a fleeting dream, to which will have succeeded the lustre of a beautiful day. Then shall I soon forget all the afflictions and all the pains of this short life, and I shall be recompensed by the enjoyment of a pure and lasting felicity. Then we shall find ourselves reunited with wise and virtuous men in the assembly of the just made perfect in heaven. And if, to render our felicity complete, it is necessary, as I can scarcely doubt, that we should know again the persons whom we here tenderly loved, and should enter into new and closer relations, thou, O heavenly Father, wilt not deprive us of this sweet satisfaction. Yes, we shall then advance from one degree of improvement and felicity to another ; and by imparting to each other, without the shadow of jealousy and envy, all our knowledge, our advantages, and pleasures, we shall multiply them to in-

finiteness, and make the enjoyment of them more noble and delightful. Those friends whose loss I deplore have fought the good fight and finished their course, whilst I am yet obliged to struggle with difficulties here below. They have run the race and reached the goal, whilst I am still pressing towards it. They now rest from their labors, and their works have followed them. And shall I not rejoice in their victory and their rewards, their felicity and glory? Can I wish to see them reënter the list, and begin anew their painful labors — to see them again expose themselves to the dangers and the adversities of life.

No, dear departed friends! however I valued you here, however sensibly I feel your loss, I wish not to see you again struggling beneath the burdens of mortality. I hail your safe arrival on that blessed shore, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Thanks be to thee, O my God, who art

their Father and mine, that Thou hast sustained them in their combats, conducted them to the end, and introduced them to the enjoyments of the just. But, perhaps, like a forsaken orphan, I may be apt to consider myself as a solitary individual in the midst of a tumultuous crowd of joyful, busy men. Perhaps I have lost my principal support, my most generous benefactor, and my faithful guardian and guide. Alas! it is now that I most sensibly perceive my own weakness, dependence, and insufficiency. It is now that I groan under the feeling of my wants ; and every difficulty I experience, every danger I meet with, now fills me with fear and terror.

But am I really so forsaken and destitute of help as I imagine ? How many wise and virtuous Christians are there in the world who are disposed to conduct the feeble and those who are destitute of help ? Am I not, moreover, under the constant direction of thy providence, O thou Parent

of mankind ? Canst Thou forsake any one of thy children who flies to Thee for refuge, casts himself into thy bosom, and humbly submits to thy will ?

But it is thy will that I should exercise my powers and make greater efforts to improve in virtue. It is thy will that, no longer leaning on the support of others, I should walk alone in the journey of life ; that I should be less influenced by the example of others than by my own principles ; that I should accustom myself to think and act with more steadiness and consistency, that I may one day become to my brethren what those persons, whose loss I deplore, were to me. These may be among the reasons why Thou hast taken from me these supports and left me to myself.

Teach me, O Lord, to do and bear thy will, and to draw instruction from the adversities of life.

Are they innocent children, the objects of

my sweetest hopes, that death hath snatched from me ?

Taken from this world in the age of innocence to pass into a more perfect abode, they are sheltered from the snares and temptations of the present life ; they have escaped a thousand evils and a thousand dangers ; and Thou wilt not fail to realize the hopes which they have raised by their natural dispositions, and by the excellent faculties with which Thou hast endowed them. Yes, Thou art their true Father, and wilt advance them much better than I could possibly do. Thou wilt conduct them with much more ease and safety to the end of their existence than the wisest and best of earthly parents could.

Is it the friend, the confident of my heart, whose death I lament ? But was he not at the same time, and much more, the friend of **GOD**, and the friend of all wise and good men ? And must not death have extended the sphere of his activity, enno-

bled his sentiments, and augmented his happiness ? What a prospect for every one who is capable of a generous, disinterested friendship !

Moreover, is not all friendship, founded in truth and virtue, in its own nature immortal ? Is it not as immortal as truth and virtue ? In separating virtuous friends, death only purifies and exalts their friendship. Like a tree, transplanted into a more fertile soil and milder climate, it shall flourish again beyond the tomb and bear immortal fruit.

When I moisten with my tears the grave of my friends, it is not for them but for myself I weep. It is only their *bodies* that lie in the tomb. Their immortal souls are returned to their Creator and their Father. Nothing that was great, and good, and amiable in them—nothing that excited my esteem and love for them is perished. Their souls continue to think, and think with greater freedom and justness than ever.

Their inclinations and sentiments are the same, excepting that they are more and more exalted and refined. Even to me their most excellent qualities are not lost. Often will I recall to mind their precepts, their examples, their exhortations and advice, and from thence derive wisdom and instruction. Their image, deeply impressed on my heart, shall be often present to me ; sometimes kindly to reprove me for my faults, and at others to encourage me in virtue. Possibly, in a future life, they shall again be my instructors and my guides, and instate me in the important and rejoicing employments which await me in the heavens. Yes, O my God, the friends of my heart belonged to Thee, and they will be eternally thine. Thou gavest them to me, Thou hast taken them from me, and blessed be thy Name.

EXERCISES OF PIETY,

FOR THE LORD'S DAY.

I.—FOR THE MORNING.

HAIL day of the Lord! when my body should rest from its temporal employments; but my soul, endowed with intelligence and formed for immortality, should display its noblest activity! The day consecrated to the offices of piety, the instructions of religion, and the worship of God; the day for preserving the memory of the Creation of all things, and for celebrating the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ!

With what pleasing emotions do I contemplate my fellow Christians of all nations,

in all parts of the world, relieved from the burden of their employments and the hurry of their business, raising themselves above the vain attachments of earth, and seeking in the service and love of GOD, that happiness which is nowhere else to be found. And who can estimate the many just reflections and noble ideas, the many good sentiments and pious resolutions, which this day produces and preserves among Christians ! To the appointment and the observation of this solemn festival, the world is indebted, more than to any other circumstance, for the diffusion of the most important knowledge ; for the advancement of social order, refinement, and happiness ; and for the continuance and spread of the glorious Gospel. Let us, then, venerate the salutary institution !

Accept my thanks, O GOD ! for this blessed day, and for the valuable advantages I have derived from it. How many times hath the piety of my fellow wor-

shippers awakened and inflamed my own ! How many times hath my heart felt more calm, more impressed with the truths of religion, more inflamed with the love of goodness, the love of God, and the love of man, when in union with my Christian brethren I have bowed before thee, O thou Most High ! How often hath the agreeable light of truth, and the transporting image of virtue, left the most lively impressions on my heart and spirit, after engaging in the devotions and duties of the sanctuary ! Then have vanished all the doubts that distressed me ; then have disappeared all the difficulties I had met in the way of holiness and perfection ; and nothing was feared to stop or slacken my pace. Then I felt new strength and courage to pursue my race, new zeal and hopes to gain the prize !

O may *this day* produce in me like salutary effects ! Filled with profound respect and true filial confidence, I will draw nigh

to thee, my Creator and Father, and join thy worshippers, to offer the common sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which is due to Thee ! Penetrated with joy and gratitude, I shall feel by my own experience the happiness of that man who knows Thee, who loves Thee, who is united to Thee ! of that child whom Thou dost direct and govern, and who freely resigns himself to thy paternal guidance. Inflamed with the most generous affection for mankind, I shall rejoice in the idea that we are all originally equal, all invited to approach Thee together, and all heirs of the same future blessedness. Filled with holy fervor, I will hear, with attention, those great truths which shall be preached ; apply them to my conduct, my necessities, my particular circumstances ; and open my heart to their heavenly influence. Far from me be all indifference, luke warmness, or absence of mind ; all prejudice, every earthly idea, and carnal passion ; every thing which might

prevent my affording an attentive ear to the voice of truth, or obstruct its salutary efficacy on my mind and conduct.

I will also consecrate a part of the leisure which this day secures to me, to converse with myself, to examine carefully the state of my soul, to reflect on what I have heard or read, and to turn it to the advantage of my true and essential interests. The mind has need of nourishment and strength, as well as the body ; and this day is principally designed to obtain it. The mind has need of relaxation from its temporal engagements, and I ought this day to procure it such relaxation. The more obstacles and dangers lie in my way, the greater risk of stumbling and being misled, the more important is it that I sometimes stop in the midst of my course, to enter into myself, to survey the path I have trodden, and that which remains, and to compare the one with the other. This is one of the tasks I propose this day to perform. I will reflect

with myself, that I may learn the moral state of my soul! I will endeavor to discover what obstacles have prevented my greater progress in knowledge and virtue, in Christian duty and felicity; and I will diligently inquire what remains to be done to increase my attainments and perfect my graces. Grant me, O my God, thine assistance and blessing, that all which I may think, read, hear, and do, to-day, may subserve the great end of my spiritual advancement.

And oh may this day be improved and honored by multitudes of my brethren of mankind; and contribute to render them more wise, more virtuous, and more happy! Let thy Spirit, great God! animate and strengthen thy faithful servants who shall this day preach thy gospel; and may thy word have free course and be edified! May error, and ignorance, and prejudice, yield to the light of knowledge, the convictions of truth, and the progress of Christianity;

and thy name be known in all the earth,
and thy kingdom come, and the whole
world be filled with thy glory! Amen!

II.—FOR THE EVENING.

THE day consecrated to religious rest, and to the solemn adoration of the Supreme Being, is closed! May a day like this be usefully distinguished above all other days! Is there a more noble, a more sublime, a more transporting employment than the worship of GOD? Is there one which supposes higher faculties, or opens more pleasing prospects? Is there one which exalts us more above the brutes, and brings us nearer to heavenly intelligences?

When my soul, O my GOD, is employed on Thee, it is engaged with all that is most beautiful, most adorable, most amiable in the universe; with all that can comfort, tranquillize, and rejoice it; with all that can be desired on earth or hoped in heaven for

blessedness or perfection. When I unite with my brethren in rendering the tribute of adoration and praise due to Thee, I discharge the sublimest duty of which a human creature is capable.

Now let me inquire of myself whether I have this day experienced how honorable is this privilege, how delightful is this duty! Have I performed it willingly or with reluctance? Was it with pleasure or uneasiness that I joined my fellow creatures in presenting to our common Parent and generous Saviour the sacrifice of praise and the oblation of devotion? Did my heart and spirit truly take a part in this homage? Was my adoration rational, my gratitude sincere? Did no folly mingle with it, no harbored corruption render it impure? Have I realized that the Supreme Being could derive no benefit from my religious exercises, that I could not acquire by them any right to his favors, and that all their utility is relative to their effect? And have

my devotions this day inspired me with new gratitude, humility, submission, and obedience ? Have I realized more fully my own helplessness, my entire dependence upon divine Providence, my obligations for past favors, and my need of present and future mercies. Have I been suitably affected with the greatness of my privileges and the sublimity of my hopes as a Christian ? What are the important reflections that have engaged me this day ? To what good dispositions have I been conscious ? What serious resolutions have I formed ? What truth hath particularly struck and affected me ? What duty hath appeared peculiarly necessary for my efforts to fulfil ? To what fault have I felt a liableness, to what vice a temptation ? Or what doctrines of eternal wisdom, what motives to holiness and virtue, have made the deepest impression on my mind and heart ? Have I gained new strength, new encouragement to discharge my duty with exactness, and

new incitements towards Christian perfection? Am I, by this sacred relaxation, and these spiritual pleasures, brought into a condition for resuming to-morrow my employments and labors with renovated vigor? In a word, have the solemnities of the day served to unite me more closely to my God and Saviour, and to bring me nearer the glorious ends for which I am destined?

If they have produced these good effects, I owe it, Heavenly Father, to the influence of thy blessed Spirit; and I would express my devout and lively gratitude for thy grace. O may the seeds of truth and virtue which Thou hast caused to fall into my heart this day, take deep root, and yield abundant produce! May this indeed be a day of blessings to me! May I find it to have advanced me in preparedness for the abode of the just, the assembly of the saints, and the glorious rest which remaineth for the children of God; there I shall

know Thee better, adore Thee more worthily, and in communion with Thee find and enjoy supreme and eternal felicity. Amen !

